

Huskers Illustrated

**NEWS
PLEASE RUSH**

Volume 20, No. 12

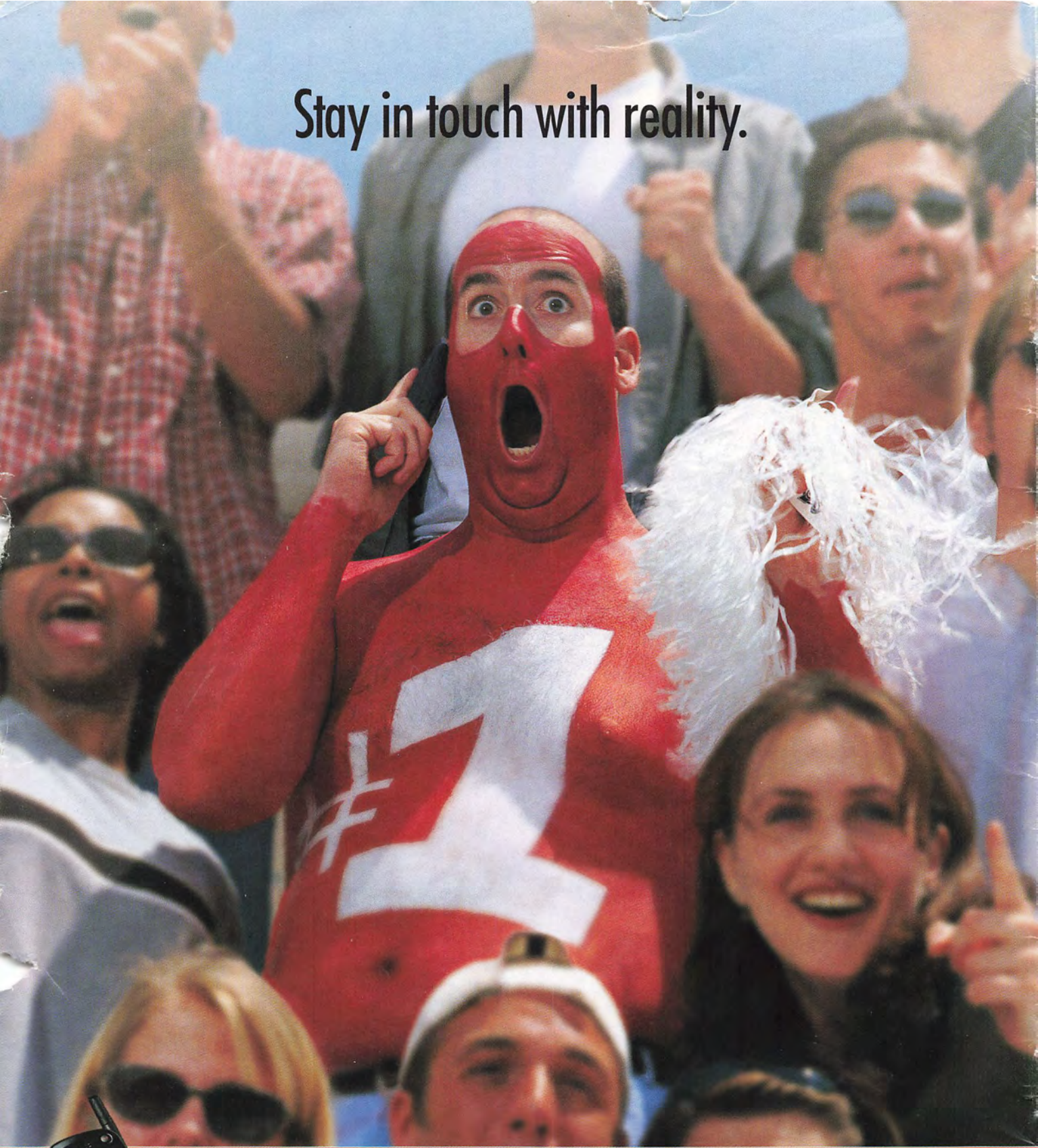
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5-0

Huskers Take Wind Out Of Cyclones



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Some Things Are Better

*Offensive production up;
defense shows signs of improvement*



Brian Hill

WHAT A DIFFERENCE a year makes.

Last year at this time, the main concerns were the Nebraska running game and fumbles.

Through five games in 1999, the Huskers were averaging 230.6 yards per game rushing and had just one 100-yard-plus individual performances. By comparison, the 2000 Huskers are averaging 351.4 yards rushing per outing and have had seven 100-yard-plus games.

Dan Alexander (561), Eric Crouch (478) and Correll Buckhalter (374) all are far ahead of last year's rushing leader after five games — Crouch with 292 yards.

Last year at this time, Nebraska had already fumbled 16 times and lost seven. This year's totals are six and one.

In scoring offense, the Huskers are averaging 41.8 points per game, compared to 37.0 at this time last year.

That leads us to this year's concern — the defense. After the 49-27 victory at Iowa State, Nebraska is allowing 20.2 points per game this season. The Huskers have allowed 101 points, compared to just 44 through the first five games of the 1999 season.

It's easy to see why, when you look at the yardage figures. Nebraska is giving up 348.8 yards per game this season, as opposed to 210.8 at this point last year.

The bottom line, of course, is victories, and there's a big 5-0 on the front of this magazine.

Do the Blackshirts need to play bet-

ter for the Huskers to remain unbeaten and a national championship contender? Of course. Can they and will they play better? Yes and yes.

In this latest test, there were still a number of big plays, and the Cyclones amassed 346 passing yards.

But there were also positive signs.

Check out the rushing yardage. Iowa State came in ranked No. 13 in the country, led by Ennis Haywood, who was fresh off a 241-yard game. Nebraska limited Haywood to 27 yards and the Cyclones to 37.

Maybe this relatively young and inexperienced defense is starting to come of age.

It can't be any too soon, with games against high-scoring Oklahoma (63 points Saturday against Texas) and Kansas State on the horizon.

The struggling defense and a slow-starting offense allowed Iowa State to hang around for three quarters, hopeful of the upset. The Huskers exploded for 28 fourth-quarter points to make the game look much more one-sided than it really was.

You'll read much more about Nebraska's win over the vastly improved Cyclones in this edition.

Contributing editor Mike Babcock takes a look at the Husker offensive line and their pancake competition. No, they're not in an all-you-can-eat event. We're talking knockdown blocks here.

And, by the way, we all should consider being a little less critical of the 2000 Huskers.

They're not perfect, but their record certainly is. ■



ON THE COVER

Bobby Newcombe breathed life into the Nebraska return game with a school-record 94-yard punt return for a touchdown in the first half. Photo by Scott Bruhn

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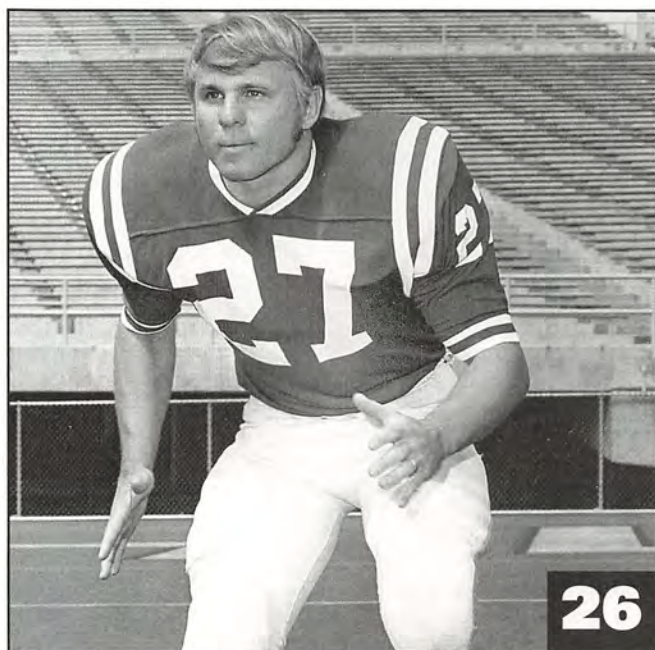
Nebraska's veteran offensive line coach Milt Tenopir says knockdown blocks are 'an evaluation of effort.' By Mike Babcock

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Who to Play?

Dennis Franchione might have been misquoted. It happens. Or the third-year head coach who has turned around Texas Christian's football fortunes might have been a bit disingenuous.

"We can't get anybody to play us anymore," he was quoted in Sports Illustrated's annual college football issue. "A lot of them just say, 'Hey, you guys are getting too good.'"

Cornhusker Athletic Director Bill Byrne wouldn't have said anything like that to Franchione or to his counterpart at the Fort Worth, Texas, school, Eric C. Hyman. It was the other way around.

Nebraska was to have played the Horned Frogs this season, and again in 2001 and 2002.

But TCU opted out of the contract, not because Nebraska was getting too good but rather because it was too good already. And you don't turn around a program by playing the Cornhuskers.

In fairness to Franchione, the decision to drop Nebraska from the schedule was made before he arrived. Nevertheless, the fact remains, TCU wanted no part of the Cornhuskers.

Because of that, Nebraska ended up opening this season against San Jose State. And it will open the next two regular seasons at Memorial Stadium against tiny Troy State.

The Troy, Alabama, school of 5,100 will move into NCAA Division I-A in 2001. And Nebraska, no doubt, will take considerable abuse in the national media for scheduling the Trojans.

But Nebraska had little choice in the matter. "I think we did an awful lot in terms of trying to identify who was out there, who was able to be looked at in terms of finishing out our schedule," Coach Frank Solich said on the day Byrne announced that Troy State would be coming to Lincoln.

"It just made sense with where we were at in the timing."

If Troy State hadn't been willing, and eager, to play for a guarantee of \$475,000 each season, the Cornhuskers would have had to play in a preseason game to have a full schedule.

Notre Dame and Rice will be Nebraska's other non-conference opponents next season. So the addition of Troy State, except for the name, fits Solich's scheduling philosophy.

"Everybody wants to win conference championships," he said. "Everybody wants to win national championships. And the best way to win championships is to probably not play Notre Dame every week, not play Penn State every week,



Frank Solich says scheduling Troy State "just made sense with where we were at in the timing."

not play that caliber of teams every week. "It's very difficult to go through a season without getting your players banged up with those kinds of games, to the point where trying to win 12 or 13 games of that nature is no small task."

Every national title contender takes such an approach, with the possible exception of Florida State, which has annual non-conference games against in-state rivals Miami and Florida.

The Seminoles do get a break playing in the mediocre Atlantic Coast Conference, however. No ACC team has seriously challenged them since they joined the conference.

But all of the other programs with a perennial national championship focus schedule one or two non-conference opponents for whom a victory would represent a major upset.

Florida's first two games this season were against Ball State and Middle Tennessee. Virginia Tech opened against Akron. And Kansas State is always criticized for its non-conference schedule.

Being successful with a rugged non-conference schedule can be done, according to Solich. And it has been done. But "do you want to try to take that on every year?" he said.

"I think if you look at the bowl selection process and who gets placed in national championship games, it's not necessarily the team that plays the toughest schedule.

"It's the team that can get through its schedule undefeated. And everybody starts off with that goal. Sometimes you can make that goal tougher on yourself than what it needs to be."

Even though the formula for determining the teams that will play in the Bowl Championship Series national title game (in the Orange Bowl on Jan. 3, 2001) takes strength of schedule into account, there are enough other factors to balance out a schedule determined to be of average strength. "In our scheduling, I think we are open to actually playing anybody," Solich said. "But we'll also look at what makes sense in terms of the finances and also what makes sense in terms of when we travel and how far."

The economics of Nebraska's home sellout streak are such that the Cornhuskers want to play at least two of their non-conference games each season at Memorial Stadium. So the scheduling of Troy State is a positive because next season's game will be a third at home in non-conference play.

Franchione was lamenting his inability to schedule a game against Virginia Tech, a high-profile opponent, this season in the comment to Sports Illustrated. If the Horned Frogs had really needed a high-profile opponent, they probably still could have played Nebraska.

Future schedules 2001

Sept. 1	Troy State
Sept. 8	Notre Dame
Sept. 15	Rice
Sept. 29	at Missouri
Oct. 6	Iowa State
Oct. 13	at Baylor
Oct. 20	Texas Tech
Oct. 27	Oklahoma
Nov. 3	at Kansas
Nov. 10	Kansas State
Nov. 23/24	at Colorado

2002*

Aug. 30	Troy State
Sept. 7	Utah State
Sept. 14	at Penn State
Oct. 5	at Iowa State
Oct. 12	Missouri
Oct. 19	at Oklahoma State
Oct. 26	at Texas A&M
Nov. 2	Texas
Nov. 9	Kansas
Nov. 16	Kansas State
Nov. 29/30	Colorado

*Per NCAA rules, an additional game could be added in 2002 (maximum 12 games) ■

OFFENSIVE COMPLEXITY

Defensive preparations change every week because of college football's offensive diversity and complexity. One week a defense will have to deal with a run-oriented offense such as Nebraska's. The next it will be faced with the challenge of a passing attack, forcing quick adjustments.

"The myriad formations we get and the shifts and the motion, you have to have players back there that are perceptive and poised," Cornhusker defensive backs coach George Darlington said.

The dean of Big 12 football coaches, a member of Tom Osborne's first staff in 1973, has seen offenses become increasingly complex. "No question about it," he said.

"In fact, 28 years ago when I came here, our offense was considered one of the more complicated in college football. And I'll assure you, the number of sets we had then . . . our kids (defensive backs) would be bored practicing against the few sets we had at that time.

"Today it's gone the other way. A lot of it involves the changes in blocking, allowances in blocking to where people can pass more and they can spread you out, get rid of the ball and not figure their quarterback's going to get killed. It's amazing. It really is."

NIGHT MOVES

Nebraska had its normal afternoon walk-through on the Friday before the Cornhuskers' first night game of the season against Missouri.

"Our lighting is so good that it's like playing in the daytime," said Coach Frank Solich. Even so, he's among those who prefer afternoon games.

"I personally like to get it going (in the) early afternoon, normally," said Solich. "That gives you enough time to get around, get ready . . . and not sit around all day."

However, "I think the fans seem to get real excited, sometimes, about night games," he said. "They have a lot more time to prepare for the game and get fired up."

Also, early in the season "it'll be a little cooler for them."

Quarterback Eric Crouch doesn't mind night games. "I love playing night games," he said. "It kind of reminds me of high school and playing under the Friday night lights. It's exciting for me."

The daylong waiting isn't exciting.

"We don't quite look forward to the night games as much as a team, just because there's so much waiting, so much down time," said senior I-back Dan Alexander.

For fans at Memorial Stadium, however, "I think it's a lot better at night," Alexander said. ■

QUICK HITS

What's Happening In Nebraska Athletics?

OLYMPIC UPSET

Former Cornhusker wrestler Rulon Gardner produced one of the most dramatic upset victories in the history of the Olympic Games when he defeated Russia's Alexander Karelin to win the gold medal in Greco-Roman wrestling competition in Sydney, Australia, in late September.

Sports writers covering the event described it as the "Miracle on the Mat."

Former Cornhusker wrestling Coach Tim Neumann, who recruited Gardner to Nebraska, compared the upset to Lincoln Northeast High School defeating the Green Bay Packers.

"Right now, Rulon is the man," said Tolly Thompson, a Cornhusker strength coach who was Gardner's teammate at Nebraska in the early 1990s.

Karelin had never been defeated in international competition and had not been scored on in 10 years. He was looking to win an unprecedented fourth consecutive Olympic gold medal.

"When did I think I could beat him? About 10 minutes ago," Gardner, the son of Wyoming dairy farmers, told the Associated Press after the championship match in the super-heavyweight division. "I kept saying, 'I think I can. I think I can.' But it wasn't until it was over that I knew I could."

Gardner transferred to Nebraska from Ricks junior college in Idaho.

Another former Cornhusker (and assistant coach), Matt Lindland, won a silver medal in the 167.5 pound division of the Greco-Roman competition, losing to Russia's Mourat Kardanov in the finals. Lindland had to win a protracted legal battle in order to represent the United States in Sydney.

BASKETBALL PLAYERS OUT

Nebraska basketball coach Barry Collier has announced the team will be without the services of junior forward Danai Young and senior forward Ross Buckendahl for the 2000-2001 season.

Young, in his first season with the Huskers after transferring from Cowley Community College, underwent surgery at the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minn., to repair a broken bone in his right shooting wrist. Young will be required to wear a cast for the next three months before beginning his rehabilitation. The injury was suffered prior to his arrival at Nebraska.

Young is a 6-foot-4, 190-pound native of Riverdale, Calif., and was a third-team all-conference selection in the Kansas Jayhawk Community College Conference. He averaged 12.5 points, 5.3 rebounds and 2.0 steals per game and shot 51.1 percent from the field.

Buckendahl will also miss the season after undergoing knee surgery to repair ligament damage in his right knee. A 6-5, 210-pound native of Battle Creek High School, Buckendahl saw action in 14 games last season, grabbing 15 rebounds and scoring five points.

On the bright side, freshman Marques McCarty, a 6-5, 185-pound forward from Sugarland, Texas, is recovering after undergoing arthroscopic knee surgery during the first week of classes. Collier said McCarty is making a speedy recovery and should return to action any day. McCarty averaged 15.1 points, six rebounds and two assists per game at Fort Bend Austin High School.

CREDIT WHERE CREDIT IS DUE

I-back Dan Alexander calls Nebraska's offensive line "definitely the best in the nation." As a result, "I can go out there and make mistakes with our offensive line that I couldn't make at other schools," he said.

Also, "I can make mistakes that can be overcome by just (quarterback) Eric Crouch's athletic ability, or the receivers' (athletic ability). Sometimes your team makes you look a little better than you are.

"I feel like my team has made me look really good."

Alexander was being overly modest in giving himself a grade of C-plus through the non-conference season.

"I'd definitely like to go out there and do better," he said. "I'm not getting down on myself and saying I'm a horrible back. But I'd definitely like to go out there and do better and feel better about myself after my performance." ■

Constant Reminder

Visualization helps kicker Brown calm his mind, focus its power



**Mike
BABCOCK**

JOSH BROWN DESCENDS on an elevator, 10 floors, and exits into a room with white walls. The walls are like large movie screens, on which video clips of him kicking are projected.

Brown watches himself kick a 42-yard field goal in last season's Big 12 championship game against Texas. And he watches himself kick three field goals in a 37-0 victory against Texas A&M.

The white room is Brown's "happy place, where you're very comfortable and you're not worried, you're not scared and you're very calm," Nebraska's sophomore place-kicker said.

While he watches the images on the walls, he hears the voice of Dr. Jack Stark, the Cornhuskers' team psychologist. "You're confident," Stark says. "You're solid in your performance."

The images reinforce Stark's words. "You're going to have a great day," he says.

The words are real. The elevator and the white room are not, at least to anyone except Brown. They exist in his imagination. And to him they are as real as a perfectly struck place-kick.

He watches himself on the elevator and entering the white room with the video walls.

"I'm walking. I can see myself walking," he said. "I picture a camera following me. It sees me from above. You have to have an imagination. You have to think like you're doing these things."

In addition to the kicking he does every day in practice, he also kicks in his imagination. "In a sense, you're getting reps in your mind. You're picturing the angles and the hash marks and how you're hitting the ball, where your foot's hitting the ball, where you're stepping," he said.

"It's just like having a dream that's so real you can feel the sweat and the weight of the helmet, everything. You really just have to focus on every detail you experience on the field."

Brown is among several football players who rely on visualization techniques taught by Stark to enhance their performance. He's the only kicker who does so on a regular basis.

"There are probably a lot of skeptical guys that just want to be strong, have great ability. And you can get by on that at certain positions. But in mine, your mind has to be calm," he said.

And visualization helps him calm his mind, as well as focus its power.

Brown admits he was skeptical when Stark suggested he visualize. But he was willing to try. "I think it's something that kind of intrigued me," he said. "Anything that helps me get better, I'm going to try, within the rules. I had heard Kris (Brown) did it and he had great success with it."

Kris Brown, Josh's predecessor at Nebraska, is in his sec-

ond season as the place-kicker for the NFL's Pittsburgh Steelers. "I try to mimic and do a lot of the things Kris did," Josh Brown said.

"He'll tell you, like I would, that it's done great things for him."

Josh wasn't so certain of that when he agreed to try visualization for the first time. During his initial session with Stark, "I had my eyes closed, and I was laughing under my breath," he said. "I thought, 'What's this guy doing? This is a joke.' But it's become very valuable to me."

The process began with wearing a heart monitor to determine how his heart rate increased when he was preparing to kick. "Sometimes in that situation you can actually feel and see your heart beating," he said. "I really try to control the heart rate by deep breathing, and concentrating."

Although he has done it often enough now that he can take himself through the visualization process, it's most effective with Stark's help because he can focus on Stark's voice.

When he's by himself, there's silence, nothing to hear.

Typically, Brown has a 5-minute visualization session about three hours before kickoff on the day of a game. And he likes to get to the stadium early, to prepare himself mentally.

He also begins to focus on the sideline when it appears he might be called on to attempt a field goal. "I'm breathing on the sideline when it's almost time, if it's third-and-6, third-and-7, and there's an opportunity opening up for me. I zone in and get close to where I think I need to be," he said.

"I try to calm myself down as much as possible."

Kicking is as much mental as physical. And Brown tries blank his mind when he's on the field. Even so, "it would be a lie for any kicker to say he's totally not going to get nervous," he said.

If Tracey Wistrom hadn't caught a crucial third-and-9 pass from Eric Crouch in overtime at Notre Dame, Brown would have had to kick a 42-yard field goal to force another overtime.

It wasn't apparent that Wistrom had the first down so Brown started onto the field and "hit a zone. 'Job to do. Stop worrying. Go,'" he said. "I was out there to react, not to think."

A miss "probably could have cost me a career. Or it could have been a wonderful life."

But in his mind in such situations "it's neither," he said. "It's just practice. It's just a kick."

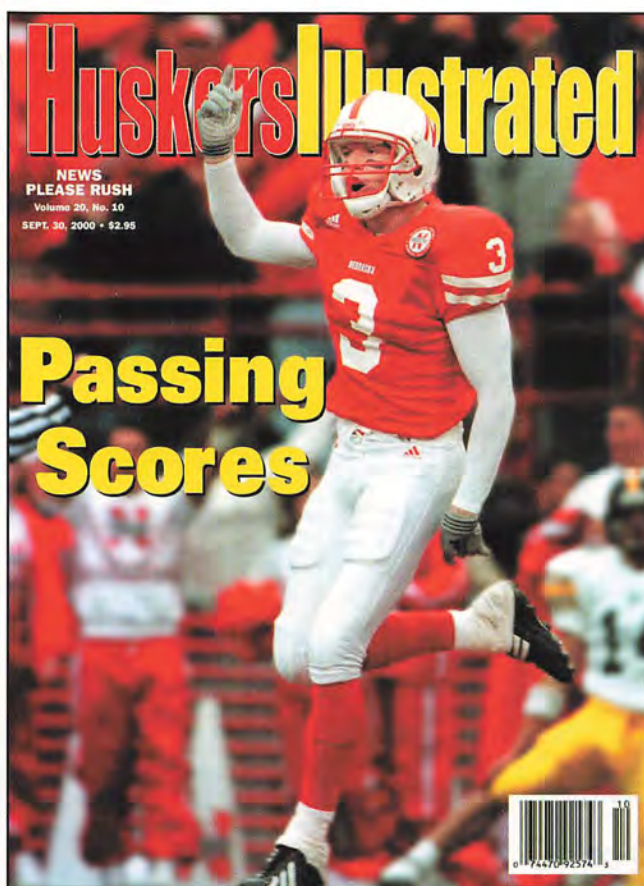
Even so, "when they moved the markers, such a relief came over me. Then the thoughts started rolling in, what could have happened. It could have been an either-way game," he said. "But I don't have any doubt in my mind that I would have made that kick. I've done it a thousand times."

The white room, 10 floors down on the elevator, is a constant reminder. ■



Josh Brown hit 14-of-20 field goals last year.

ALL HUSKERS . . .



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. . . ALL THE TIME

Growing Pains?

**Blackshirts need to turn it up
for stretch run**



**Bob
SCHALLER**

MAYBE THEY ARE NOT GREAT.

Not yet, at least.

How about good? No, not quite there — one game does not a season make.

But to be called out two weeks in a row . . . well, that's a lot to handle. First it was the Iowa Hawkeyes saying the highly regarded Blackshirts are not living up to their billing. And then, it was a Missouri player calling out the Huskers, referring to the defense as "the so-called Blackshirts."

The scary part? There is some truth in that, at least on this point.

Craig Bohl needs some time to grow into his new role as defensive coordinator. Frank Solich had an incubation period — and he's still learning — so it's not fair to assume Bohl's defense would be at the level of Charlie McBride's from day one.

On the other hand, day one should come in spring and fall ball, not during the regular season, right?

McBride's specialty was coaching his players "against" the other teams. Some coaches refer to the special blitzes and coverages as "bells and whistles." McBride was the master in that part of the defense especially. He knew how to break down an opposing offense like no other. For all of the talk about offense, the Fiesta Bowl win over Florida will long go down, in my book, as the best defensive coaching job of the decade.

McBride could find the soft underbelly, and puncture it, wounding the other team, taking it out of its normal sets, forcing adjustments — and thus confusion — during the heat of battles. Bohl's teams don't look so much unprepared as they look outmanned, which is especially difficult to swallow considering THIS IS NEBRASKA we're talking about here.

The offense is so limited — though the passing has been upgraded — that the Huskers can't count on a 45-point performance every game, especially against a team that is a lot more likely to hang 35 or 40 points on the Blackshirts. Therefore there's no way Nebraska can show up lacking defensively. The offense could do more to help the Blackshirts by putting together some long scoring drives.

What's that adage about the best defense is keeping the opposing offense off of the field? It's applicable here.

Nebraska can't win a track meet against a Kansas State, or even Oklahoma, or against, say, Texas in the Big 12 Game, if that opportunity arises.

The Blackshirts are more like the yellow shirts — not much more effective than a caution light in traffic.

You know, the "slow down please, but pass through if you are careful."

That wasn't lost on Solich and the Huskers after they escaped Missouri's upset plans.

"There were individuals who played hard and individu-

als who made excellent plays," Solich said. "But as a unit, we just need to improve on the defensive end of it."

Nebraska gives up too many big plays. Missouri had 200-plus yards passing. And Missouri's rushing game had a few big plays, including three runs for around 30 yards.

"We gave away way too many big plays," Solich said. "We weren't able to get them where it was three downs and out. We need to improve on that area."

The Tigers lost the war, but beat the Huskers in NU's bread and butter — yardage. Missouri had 492 yards of total offense, compared to 484 for Nebraska, and actually led Nebraska by more than 100 yards of total offense through three quarters.

"We just don't have that edge that we need right now," said senior rush end Kyle Vanden Bosch. "We've had our breakdowns. We need to get them ironed out right now. We wanted to come out today and say, 'We rule the roost in the Big 12 Conference.' I don't know that we made that statement."



**Kyle Vanden Bosch
says the Huskers
haven't played up
to their ability.**

The most frustrating part for the Huskers is they see that they can be dominating. They just haven't figured out how to show it yet.

"We have the ability, we have the potential," Vanden Bosch said. "We just haven't played to our ability yet."

The scary part, at least in the Missouri game was that had quarterback Kirk Farmer not been injured after a big gain, the Tigers might have kept scoring. At that point, had Farmer taken them to the end zone, it would have been a one-touchdown game. With the effectiveness the Farmer-led Tigers were having, it's hard to imagine Nebraska winning by more than a field goal had Farmer not been knocked out of the game.

The Huskers have no pass rush, which has exposed the bad decision-making by the secondary. Because there is athleticism and experience all over the place in the secondary, yet there are times when the Huskers go for an interception and fail, or let the same receiver get open play after play. There is almost no push from the middle of the defensive line, which doesn't lend itself to helping the rush ends run the quarterback down. The rush end position, expected to be a strength, has been unsettled.

The Huskers are three deep at each rush end, but aside from Vanden Bosch, there's no one establishing himself as a starter, let alone a threat to the other team's quarterback.

On the positive side, the Huskers are winning, regardless of how pretty or ugly it looks defensively.

"You're going to get games like that in a big year like this, the one we're hoping to have," Vanden Bosch said. "We've been able to persevere. We've kept coming and coming. That's what's important." ■

Bob Schaller covers the Huskers for the North Platte Telegraph and Scottsbluff Star-Herald. He can be reached at schallerrc@aol.com.

Just Win

Style points don't always matter in national championship chase



Curt McKEEVER

THE FIRST SATURDAY of Big 12 Conference play cost Nebraska the top spot in the Associated Press poll, but that result hardly eliminated the Cornhuskers from anything meaningful.

The same probably can't be said of the six league teams who lost their openers. No club in the Big 12, now in its fifth year, has ever come back from a league-opening loss to earn a spot in the championship game.

Nebraska, despite concerns about its spotty defense (which allowed Missouri 200 yards above its offensive average) still remained a front-runner in the North after a 42-24 win against the Tigers. AP voters, however, bumped the Huskers down a notch, in favor of Florida State, which roasted Maryland 58-7.

Considering the impact polls have on the Bowl Championship Series formula, it's better to be No. 1. But NU fans will at least like the history that goes with their team being demoted from the top perch following a win.

It had only happened three times previously, and the Huskers recovered just fine.

In 1965, Nebraska started out No. 1, only to get dropped following a 20-point win against Texas Christian. Big Red still played in the Orange Bowl for a national championship (losing to Alabama).

In 1994, NU again went from No. 1 to No. 2 after beating Texas Tech by 26 points in the second game of the season. At season's end came a third national championship.

In 1997, an overtime win at Missouri sent NU to No. 3. The Huskers ended up demolishing Tennessee in the Orange Bowl to earn a fifth national crown in the coaches' poll (Michigan was voted No. 1 by the AP).

Both nationally and within the conference, Nebraska has a lot left to accomplish if it is to make it to Kansas City for the Big 12 championship and to Miami for the BCS title game.

But things could be a lot worse. While the Huskers may have struggled to beat Missouri, the same Saturday nine other Top 25 teams failed to win. Seven of those were knocked off by unranked opposition.

Suddenly, style points didn't seem so important.

Then again, at Kansas State they probably did.

The Wildcats brought their schedule-bashing critics to a screeching halt with their 44-21 win at Colorado. Now, even the most vocal K-State fan pushing for newcomer Ell Roberson to be the starting quarterback must think the 'Cats can beat the Huskers with Jonathan Beasley behind center.

The Wildcats definitely look like they'll be the toughest challenge.

The dominant performance in Boulder left a lot of people thinking they'll be in control of their destiny all the way up

to the Nov. 11 clash against Nebraska. Who knows? Look at Louisiana State. The Tigers lost at home to Alabama-Birmingham the week before they ripped into Tennessee.

But K-State's Beasley is having a banner year (he was the top-rated quarterback), thanks in part to an improved offensive line that has given him plenty of time to find speedy, game-breaking receivers Quincy Morgan and Aaron Lockett.

Lockett also gave the 'Cats more special special-teams play while subbing for the nation's most explosive returner, David Allen. And an already stingy defense, that was allowing just a touchdown per game, benefitted from the return of safety Jarrod Cooper.

Two of the Wildcats' three most dangerous games before Nebraska are home against Oklahoma and Texas Tech. Wins there would let them be able to afford a setback at Texas A&M.

Meanwhile, of the four games that would appear to be Nebraska's biggest challenges, three are on the road (Texas Tech, Oklahoma and Kansas State).

Down South, A&M has a favorable schedule. If the Aggies can beat Kansas State and Oklahoma at home, they can probably lose at Texas and still wind up first.

The Longhorns are still most people's pick — mainly because their defense is good enough to overcome a two-quarterback system that could divide players who favor Major Applewhite over Chris Simms, or vice versa. But Texas has struggled to run the ball well and has to travel to Colorado and Texas Tech before the final game against A&M.

As for the Sooners, their fate will be sealed during a three-week stretch of games at Kansas State, against Nebraska and at A&M. They'll be fortunate to win one of those.

Of course, two league losses hardly rules out anyone in the South, which has had three of its four representatives in the league championship finish 6-2.

Up North, the division winner has been 8-0 three times (Nebraska, 7-1 last year, was the exception).

Considering the start of the Big 12 championship was moved from 3:30 p.m. to 7, some heavy hitter at ABC must have been thinking there'd be a good shot that two unbeatens could meet.

After the opening week of Big 12 play, that meant Oklahoma would have to run the table because the Sooners were the only South division team still perfect.

Stay tuned. It looks like late October and November could be interesting. ■



Kansas State quarterback Jonathan Beasley is having a banner senior year.

Curt McKeever is a sportswriter, covering the University of Nebraska for the Lincoln Journal Star. In addition to reporting on football he is the primary beat writer for the men's basketball and baseball teams.

Pancakes on the Menu

Offensive line coach Tenopir says knockdown blocks are 'an evaluation of effort'

By Mike Babcock

Occasionally, Dominic Raiola will lend a hand to a downed defender. Nebraska's junior center will take the time and energy to help up a player he has just knocked to the ground.

He has an ulterior motive, however. He's not motivated by altruism.

Ulterior motive or not, teammate Jason Schwab, an offensive tackle, doesn't believe it.

"Never. Never. He's full of it. Never," Schwab said of the likelihood that Raiola would assist an opponent. "Dom's doing anything and everything to take somebody down. Whatever he's got to do, he does, diving, tackling. He does what he has to do. I've never seen anybody like that. He sacrifices his body on every play. And when he gets somebody down, that's the ultimate."

So why would Raiola help a defender get back to his feet?

"Just because that makes them think, 'This guy isn't aggressive,'" said a smiling Raiola. "Then you come back twice as fierce. And you know you've got them on their heels."

More often when he knocks down defenders, Raiola says something to them, "just to tell them I'll be back; I'm not done yet," he said. "It's fun. You say something to them. They start talking back. And you get a little conversation going. Then at the end of the

game, everybody respects each other."

Raiola commands respect among the offensive linemen, as indicated by Schwab's remarks and reflected in the fact that he holds the school single-season record for knockdown blocks.

He was credited with 140 "pancakes" last season, an average of 11.67 per game.

Pancakes are "an evaluation of effort," said offensive line coach Milt Tenopir.

"You're not going to get them done if you don't give a little extra effort . . . unless you follow through with your block, give that type of effort. That's the only reason we keep track of them." Nebraska has been keeping track of pancake blocks only since 1995.

"I don't know why we came up with that. I can't remember the origination for sure," Tenopir said. "The kids, I guess, started talking about putting somebody on their can, and so we started keeping track. It's kind of a motivational tool for them. They keep coming up to see what they've got."

First thing on Monday, the linemen head to Tenopir's office to see the totals from the previous game. Sophomore guard Toniui Fonoti's name is atop the list, an honor earned in the opener against San Jose State. Whoever has the most pancakes in the opener is listed first for the entire season.

Fonoti had 15 pancakes against San Jose State. Raiola had 14.

Obviously it's a point of pride. "Last year I was up there first," said Raiola.

In addition to the individual

totals, there is a side competition between players on the right and left sides of the line. The weekly totals for Fonoti and tackle Dave Volk are compared to the totals for Schwab and guard Russ Hochstein. Raiola's total is divided equally between the two sides. If he has an odd number of pancakes, the side with the lower total gets the extra one.

"It's kind of a gentleman's bet we've got going," Schwab said. "It's something we take pride in here at Nebraska, those pancakes and knockdown blocks. And we're working on it."

Not at the expense of grading well, however. "Pancakes are kind of a bonus," said Volk. "You want to have a good amount of them. You don't want



Scott Braker



Senior guard Russ Hochstein gets one of his 23 pancakes against Notre Dame earlier this season. Hochstein finished second on the team with 126 pancake blocks last season. Center Dominic Raiola led the Huskers with a school-record 140.

to have only two or three if you're playing 50 or 60 snaps. We want to have one or two knockdowns per play, just from the guys on the offensive line.

"If we have a game where we play 65 downs, we want to have at least 60 to 65 pancakes."

Even so, "if you grade out perfect and you don't have any pancakes, you're obviously doing a pretty good job," he said. "We're not going to get a 2.0 for our grade if our guy gets off the block.

"So pancakes are a style-point type of deal. They're style points."

Tenopir and Dan Young, who also coaches the offensive line, use a 2.0

grading scale to evaluate the play of linemen. "We really work hard to have no zeros and as few 1's as we can," Tenopir said.

They expect grades of at least 1.85 from each lineman and 60 percent efficiency or better for the line overall. That means everyone graded perfect on 60 percent of the plays.

Grading measures a lineman's consistency, and "we work as a unit," said Hochstein. "That's the most important thing for us. The first thing is to run our assignments right. Whether you knock a guy down or not, if you run your assignment right, 90 percent of the time you're going to get yards.

"Running assignments right, executing and moving people is what we want to do. The pancakes are an afterthought. Very few times have I said during a game, 'You guys got a lot of pancakes?'"

Hochstein got a lot of pancakes in the victory at Notre Dame. He was credited with 23, tying the Cornhuskers' single-game record set by Josh Heskew against California in 1998.

Hochstein visited the South Stadium training room for treatment the morning after the game and stopped by Tenopir's office to check the pancake totals. Fonoti's was first, of course, 17.



Offensive line coach Milt Tenopir says Nebraska started keeping track of pancake blocks "as sort of a motivational tool."

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Hochstein was impressed. "I thought, 'My God,' " he said.

He looked down the list to his name, with the 23 beside it. "Then I went over and looked at my grade, and I graded out pretty well," he said. "So I had a good week overall."

He didn't realize he had tied Heskew's record until later. "I remembered it was up in that area, but if no one said anything to me, it must not have been anything," Hochstein said.

Sports information director Chris Anderson was the first to congratulate him.

Leading in pancakes in a given week is a matter of pride, but little more. "Facing the razzing the rest of the guys give you is about all the acknowledgement we get," said Hochstein. "The coaches will say, 'Oh, you had a big pancake week.' And they'll point out a block or two. But that's about it."

The razzing is a reward "only if it's Russ," Volk said good-naturedly.

"We had to make sure we kept his ego in check."

Raiola had praise for his teammate, too.

"He's an effort guy so he gets a lot done," said Raiola.

No one knows more about effort than Raiola. ■

Linemen Seek Best Pancakes

Jason Schwab is still looking to make the definitive pancake block. "There hasn't really been one that stuck out in my mind," the senior offensive tackle said. "When I get it, I'll know it."

Pancakes are awarded for knocking defenders off their feet, any way a blocker can.

"A pancake's a pancake, no matter how you cut it," said Schwab. "Some are easier than others. But the ones we value most are where the guy knows you're coming and it kind of like, 'Stop me if you can.' Those are the ones you really remember, when a guy knows it. It's you versus him."

"He knows you're coming and you bury him. You're the boss. You take him anywhere you want to take him and you just drive him into the ground. I'm sure that's the ultimate for all of us."

Sophomore guard Toniau Fonoti is a

master at such blocks, according to Schwab.

"He's 340 pounds coming at you and he's strong," Schwab said. "He gets a lot of those. A lot of his pancakes are ones where he's driving people into the ground. And that's pretty impressive."

"That's what we all want. But he's just got a knack for getting people down like that."

Through the early part of the season, Fonoti was on pace to break center Dominic Raiola's single-season school record of 140 pancakes.

"He's on track to destroy the record," said Schwab.

"He's probably one of the most powerful players I've ever seen. He's just a powerhouse. He's been gifted in every way, really, strong kid, big kid, smart kid, speed. He puts it all together, well." ■

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He Was Tough in the Paint

Husker tackle Volk though future might be in basketball

Dave Volk and Casey Nelson occasionally watch the videotape and recall the championship.

The Nebraska football teammates are roommates, after all. They have roomed together since their freshman year, Volk as a scholarship offensive lineman and Nelson as a walk-on defensive lineman. "We've been best friends since we were in junior high," said Nelson.

That's about the time the videotape was made. "We probably looked better when we were younger," Nelson said with a hearty laugh. "We're more experienced now, though."

And they're also considerably bigger.

Volk, who's listed at 290 pounds, weighed a little less than 200 back then, while Nelson "was about 100 pounds lighter" than the 285 he weighs now.

"That was a lot of pounds ago," Nelson said, laughing again.

It was the summer before their freshman year in high school, Volk in Battle Creek, Neb., and Nelson in nearby Newman Grove. They were playing for a 15-and-under all-star basketball team sponsored by Valentino's, and the team won a national age-group tournament in Las Vegas, Nev.

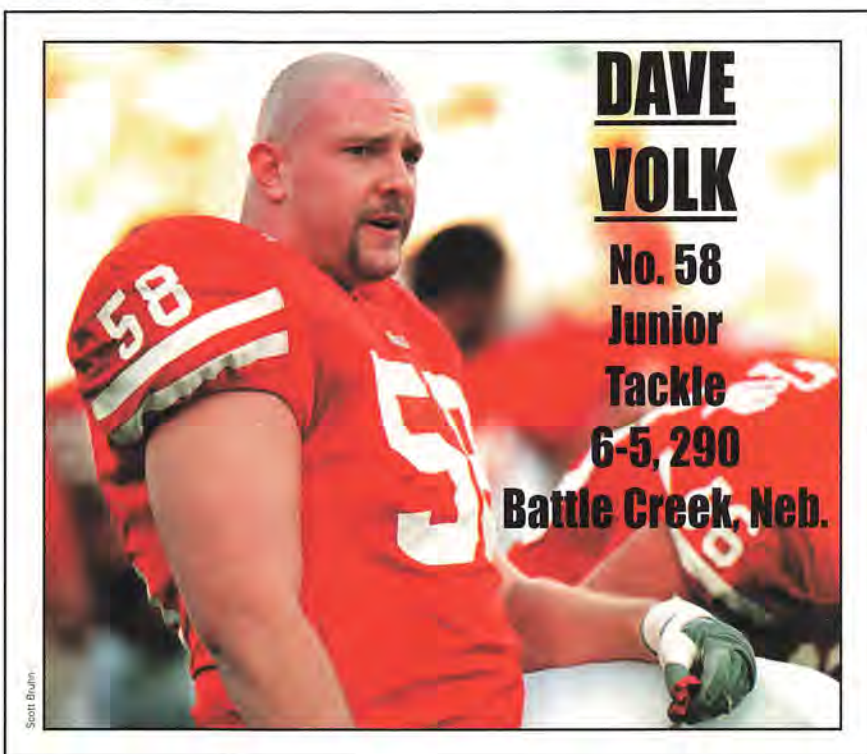
Split end Matt Davison, who's from Tecumseh, also played for the all-star team, which "got beat in one game and won the rest by about 40 or more," Volk said. "We tarred everybody."

Volk had yet to settle on football as his sport of choice. "I might have still thought I was going to be a basketball player. I don't know," he said. "If you had asked me what I was going to be doing (now), I wouldn't have said I was going to be starting for the No. 1 (football) team in the country."

Not only that, he's in his second season as a starter in Nebraska's offensive line.

"I never expected to be playing as a sophomore," said the junior left tackle. "I thought maybe I'd be playing some as a junior and maybe get to start my senior year."

"I had no idea coming in what it



**DAVE
VOLK**

No. 58

Junior

Tackle

6-5, 290

Battle Creek, Neb.

was going to be like."

Volk grew up a Cornhusker football fan, but he had no idea until after his sophomore year in high school that his athletic future would be as a football player.

He earned all-state recognition in football from the Lincoln and Omaha newspapers as a sophomore, and "that's when I started thinking a little more about football," he said.

"I had no idea that (recognition) was coming."

That's also when he started growing out more than up — he was already 6-foot-5. He weighed about 240 pounds as a sophomore and by the time he was a senior, he weighed 275.

He was an outstanding basketball player as well, averaging 23 points and 10 rebounds per game as a senior on a team that included Ross Buckendahl, a Nebraska basketball walk-on.

Not surprisingly, Volk was an inside player, a "banger," said Nelson.

"I don't think I left the paint throughout high school," Volk said.

Though they didn't really influence his decision to focus on football, Volk's only significant athletic injuries have occurred while he was playing basketball. He "messed up" an ankle during the summer after his seventh-grade year and suffered a broken bone in a

leg during his junior year.

"It's really weird. I've never been hurt playing football," said Volk. "I messed my thumb up my freshman year down here. But I've never had a serious injury playing football."

"So it's probably better that I'm doing this."

Volk has done it well, earning coaches' all-conference honorable mention last season. Even so, he might be considered the forgotten man in the line. Center Dominic Raiola and guard Russ Hochstein have received mention as Outland Trophy candidates. Guard Toniui Fonoti is regarded as the star of the future. And tackle Jason Schwab is playing in his sixth season as a result of an NCAA appeal.

"Those guys are outstanding players. They deserve all the credit they get," Volk said. "It's not a big deal to me. I'm really just glad to be here, growing up just wanting to play here."

When he was a high school freshman, he didn't know whether he'd even be playing football now, much less at Nebraska. "He was a real good basketball player," said Nelson.

"I still think he could play today if he wanted to."

Volk agrees. "My range is probably better now, shooting around outside," he said. ■

Nebraska 49

Iowa State 27



Nebraska I-back Dan Alexander tries to break away from Iowa State cornerback Atif Austin. Alexander finished with 21 carries for 96 yards.

Positive

Blackshirts limit ISU to 37 yards rushing

**Stories by
Mike Babcock
Photos by
Scott Bruhn**

The numbers didn't necessarily show it. But the Nebraska defense showed signs of awakening in a 49-27 victory against previously unbeaten Iowa State at Jack Trice Stadium in Ames.

Cyclone quarterback Sage Rosenfels passed for two touchdowns and a career-high 346 yards, which tied him for the fourth-best single-game passing total in school history.

But the statistic that pleased Nebraska's Blackshirts was Iowa State's 37 yards rushing.

"We knew they had a good rushing offense," said Cornhusker rush end Kyle Vanden Bosch. And holding the Cyclones to 37 yards on the ground "says a lot for our defense."

"Today, for the first time . . . we showed flashes of a great defense."

Iowa State went into the game ranked 13th in the nation in rushing offense, averaging 227.5 yards per game. Junior tailback Ennis Haywood averaged 153.8 of those yards, to rank fourth.

The week before, the 5-foot-11, 206-pound Haywood was selected as the Big 12 "Offensive Player of the Week," after rushing for 241 yards and two touchdowns against Baylor.

But the Blackshirts prevented a repeat performance, limiting him to 27



Iowa State's J.J. Moses is swarmed under on a kickoff return by a host of Nebraska players, including Wes Woodward (20), Jon Penny 44) and Justin Smith (92).

yards on 11 carries. Though he suffered a rib injury in the first half and wasn't expected to return, he came back to score the touchdown that cut Nebraska's lead to 21-20 with 6:46 remaining in the third quarter.

No one questioned his determination, just as no one questioned the determination of the Cornhusker defense. "I think we're improving, and that's what we're all about," Coach Frank Solich said.

Signs

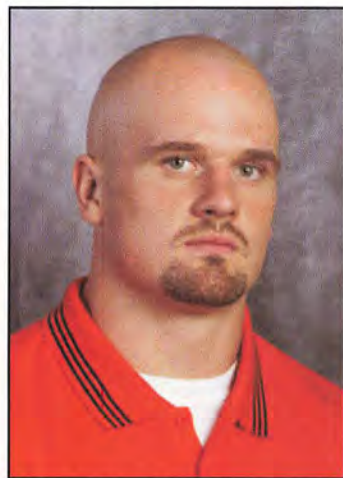


"Certainly, defensively there have been teams that moved the ball (on Nebraska). There have been teams that have put up some points. But it hasn't been just a total collapse. So we knew all we had to do was just build on some things. And I think we're coming defensively.

"I think we're an improving defensive football team."

That was probably most apparent in the fourth quarter, when Nebraska final wrested control from the stubborn Cyclones, who had a standing-room-only crowd of 50,000-plus convinced they were capable of upsetting the

Husker Player of the Game



Kyle Vanden Bosch

Cyclone Fake Doesn't Fool NU Rush End

Iowa State lined up for an apparent field goal attempt into a gusty north wind on fourth-and-5 at the Nebraska 24-yard line late in the first half. The Cyclones led 14-13.

Instead of the field goal attempt, however, Casey Baldwin, the holder, stood up and looked to run or pitch the ball to place-kicker Mike McKnight. The play might have worked had it not been for Kyle Vanden Bosch. The senior rush end pulled down Baldwin for a 2-yard loss.

That's how Vanden Bosch played from beginning to end in Nebraska's fifth victory of the season. And defensive coordinator Craig Bohl was pleased. "Kyle has really pressed," said Bohl. "I know last week he was frustrated with the play of the defense. He was frustrated with his play."

But he wasn't frustrated with either after the Iowa State game.

"He made big-time plays," Bohl said. "And that, once again, made them (the Cyclones) one-dimensional, which allowed us to do some of our special things." ■

nation's No. 1- or No. 2-ranked team — depending on the poll.

Haywood's 4-yard touchdown run, to cap an 11-play, 80-yard drive, turned out to be Iowa State's last hurrah as Nebraska countered with an 11-play, 70-yard touchdown drive early in the fourth quarter then slammed the door shut with a pass interception by backup free safety Troy Watchorn.

Fullback Willie Miller scored the touchdown that increased the lead to 28-20 with 11:09 remaining in the game. The Cyclones responded with trickery on their first play from scrimmage after that.

Freshman wide receiver Lane Danielson took a lateral pass from Rosenfels and forced a throw downfield, which Watchorn intercepted and returned 9 yards to the Iowa State 18.

Three plays later, Correll Buckhalter scored from a yard out and Cornhusker fans, who constituted a significant percentage of the crowd, were able to breathe the frigid air a little easier.

Watchorn's interception, his third of the season, "came at a very opportune time," Solich said, stating the obvious. "There's no question that thing (game) was going back and forth. Both teams at times were moving the football. At times the defenses would step up and make great plays.

"And for a period of time, it was anybody's ball game, as you very well know. Key plays in the second half were vital. Certainly Watchorn's interception was part of that.

"He seems to be a guy that's in the right place at the right time."

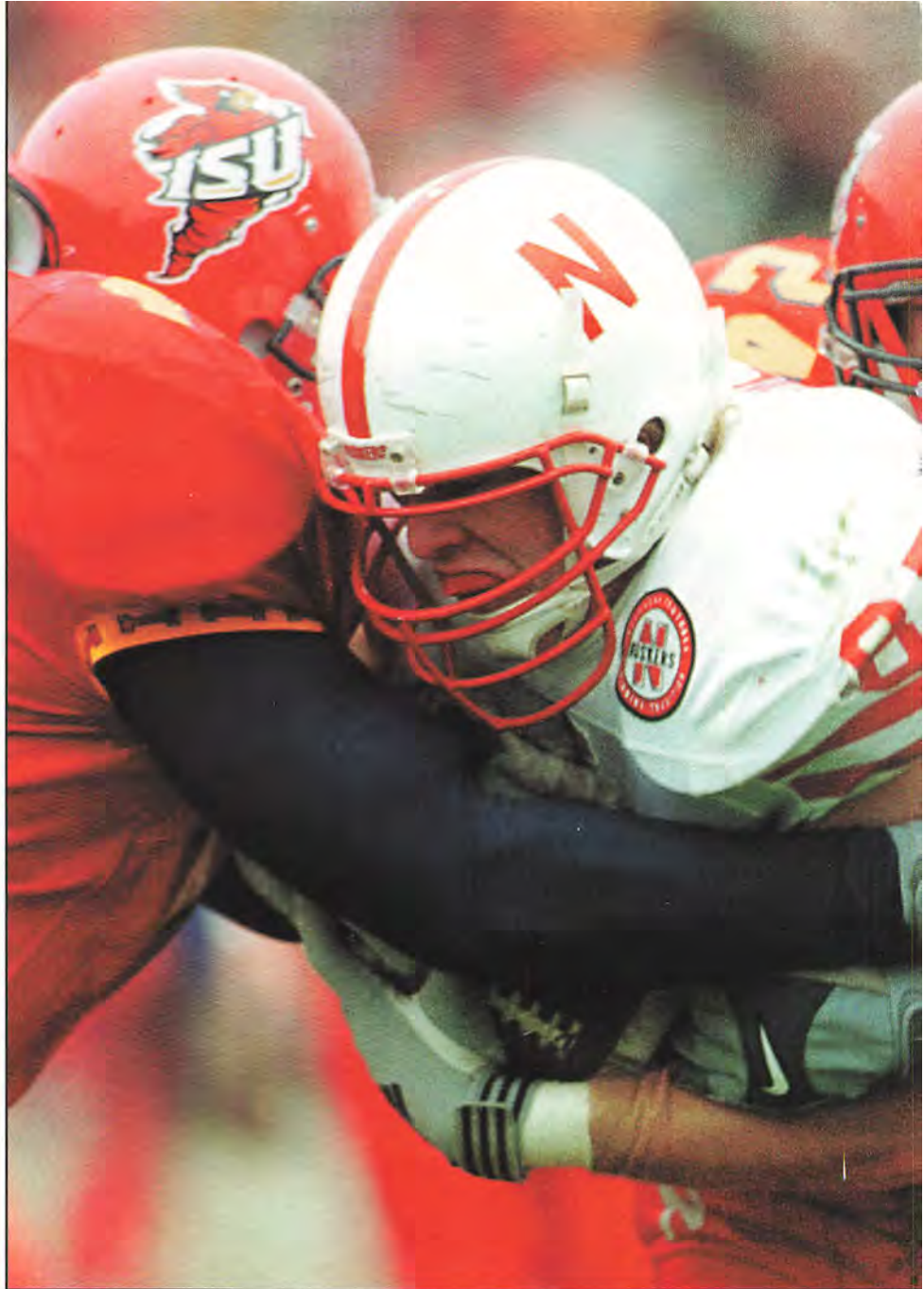
Vanden Bosch was another about whom that could be said. The senior from Larchwood, Iowa, stepped up for a defense that was without tackle Loran Kaiser, who made the trip but watched from the sidelines because of a sprained left foot. "I think Kyle really stepped up his play," said defensive coordinator Craig Bohl. "I thought he played an exceptional game."

Vanden Bosch was credited with eight tackles, including five for losses totaling 22 yards and one quarterback sack. Iowa State had not allowed a sack in four previous games.

Vanden Bosch also had three quarterback hurries.

"I've been working to make the big play," he said. "As a senior and a captain, you really need to step up and make the big play when our defense needs it. Today I made a couple of big plays, whereas before I had made the plays I was supposed to make, but I hadn't really made the big play, I felt."

As has come to be expected, quar-



Nebraska tight end Tracey Wistrom is wrapped up by Iowa State safeties Dustin Avey (left) and Doug Densmore. Wistrom finished with four catches for 101 yards, including a 52-yarder in the second quarter.

terback Eric Crouch made the big plays for the offense. He rushed for 138 yards and one touchdown and completed 7-of-17 passes for 164 yards.

His 302 total yards were a career high, and nearly school single-game record.

"We've got ourselves a great one there," Solich said. "He gives you the extra dimension. He gives you what it takes at any time in a football game to step forward, make the plays and win."

Crouch also showed his resilience, recovering from an interception that Iowa State's Jamarcus Powers returned 40 yards for the touchdown that gave

the Cyclones a 14-10 lead in the second quarter.

The interception return was a "quarterback's nightmare," said Crouch.

"That's my one for the year. That's how I think about it."

On balance, however, Iowa State's defense had problems containing the Cornhuskers, who finished with 500 total yards, including 336 rushing. I-back Dan Alexander complemented Crouch by rushing for 96 yards, and tight end Tracey Wistrom caught four passes for 101 yards.

Not everything was positive, of course. The Cyclones' passing success concerned Bohl. "We've got to look at



our secondary play," he said. "For us to be a man (coverage) team, we've got to probably win more of our wars out there. So that will kind of be a point of emphasis for us this week."

Nevertheless, Bohl found reason for optimism.

"I don't know if the yardage was completely an indicator of the improvement," he said. "But overall, just from the naked eye, I feel like we've made progress on defense."

Vanden Bosch agreed, in a big way. "I knew we were going to have a battle," he said. "I knew we had to step it up. Our intensity was good in the first half. But we had to pick it up a notch in the second half."

"And I thought we came out and did that." ■

4TH & 1 NCHES

Notes And Quotes From The Iowa State Game

IMPACT PLAYER

Free safety Troy Watchorn, a senior walk-on from Columbus, Neb., was in the right place at the right time for Nebraska and intercepted his third pass of the season in the fourth quarter.

"Some guys have the ability to come up with some big plays and see the football," defensive coordinator Craig Bohl said. "He's got great vision. He sees the ball well."

"What a big interception today."

VOTE OF CONFIDENCE

Sophomore Josh Brown kicked his first field goal of the season, a 40-yarder, with 10:45 remaining in the second quarter to give Nebraska a short-lived, 10-7 lead. He added a 24-yarder just over five minutes later to cut an Iowa State lead to 14-13. He also missed field goal attempts of 39 and 48 yards.

"Today was not an easy day to kick the ball," Coach Frank Solich said.

A 15-mile-an-hour wind out of the north gusted to 25 miles-an-hour.

As a result, Solich wasn't concerned about Brown's two misses, the first of which was into the wind. "I've got no problem with Josh," said Solich. "He's an experienced kicker."

"He'll step up and he'll make a lot of big ones for us."

EVEN BETTER

Quarterback Eric Crouch was the Big 12 coaches' co-offensive player of the year as a sophomore, sharing the award with Texas quarterback Major Applewhite.

"You look at his season last year and you say, 'Well, a guy's probably not going to beat that kind of a season, because he really, I thought, had a spectacular season last year,'" Solich said.

"But when you really look at it, I think he's beating it with his play this year."

"All the credit goes to him for the kind of player he is, the kind of toughness that he displays, the leadership ability he displays and the talent he displays on the field."

ADD CROUCH

Even though he had a career-high 302 yards of total offense, "I personally don't focus on how many yards I get. I like to look at overall team yardage," said Crouch. "I felt good about our offensive production today. We were really frustrated at halftime, and we came out and played a great second half."

"We just executed better as a team. We felt that we could pretty much move the ball at any time, so that was why we were so frustrated at halftime." Nebraska trailed 14-13 at the intermission.

CREDIT CROUCH

Tight end Tracey Wistrom, who caught four passes for 101 yards, has caught at least two passes in every game this season and at least one pass in the last eight games in which he has played.

He had a season-best 52-yard reception to set up Josh Brown's second field goal.

Wistrom credited Crouch for his success. "I'd like to say it's my routes. I do take pride in (running) my routes, but I don't know if they're that good," he said.

Wistrom also credited Crouch's durability. "What can you say? He took quite a few shots but he bounced back every time," said Wistrom. "He came through again today."

COACH MAC'S RESPECT

Iowa State Coach Dan McCarney praised the Cornhuskers. "They're a classy program and an excellent team," he said. "They deserve the No. 1 ranking."

However, he added, "I'm not going to give you a patented speech. We're sick and disappointed that we didn't win this game. We went out to win this game not (to) look respectable."

BRIEFLY NOTED

— Nebraska I-back Correll Buckhalter got the most out of his nine carries. Though he gained only 20 yards, he scored three touchdowns, tying his career-best. He also rushed for three touchdowns against Kansas in 1998.

— Cornhusker wingback Bobby Newcombe had a busy afternoon. He caught two passes for 38 yards, carried once for 5 yards, returned four punts for 29 yards and returned one kickoff for 20 yards.

Newcombe has caught at least one pass in 13 consecutive games.

— Sophomore cornerback DeJuan Groce was credited with five pass breakups, a personal best and a team best this season. ■

2000 Schedule

(Team's current record)

1	Sept. 2	San Jose State (4-2), W 49-13
2	Sept. 9	at Notre Dame (3-2), W 27-24
3	Sept. 23	Iowa (1-5), W 42-13
4	Sept. 30	Missouri (2-3), W 42-24
5	Oct. 7	at Iowa State (4-1), W 49-27
6	Oct. 14	at Texas Tech (5-1), TBA
7	Oct. 21	Baylor (2-3), TBA
8	Oct. 28	at Oklahoma (5-0), TBA
9	Nov. 4	Kansas (2-3), TBA, Homecoming
10	Nov. 11	at Kansas State (6-0), TBA
11	Nov. 24	Colorado (1-4), 11 a.m., ABC
	Dec. 2	Big 12 Championship at Kansas City, ABC

Big 12 Standings

	North		All	
	Conf.			
Kansas State	2	0	6	0
Nebraska	2	0	5	0
Iowa State	1	1	4	1
Missouri	1	1	2	3
Colorado	1	1	1	4
Kansas	0	2	2	3

	South		All	
	Conf.			
Oklahoma	2	0	5	0
Texas Tech	1	1	5	1
Texas	1	1	3	2
Texas A&M	1	1	3	2
Baylor	0	2	2	3
Oklahoma State	0	2	2	3

Oct. 7 results

Nebraska 49, Iowa State 27
Kansas State 52, Kansas 13
Missouri 24, Oklahoma State 10
Colorado 26, Texas A&M 19
Oklahoma 63, Texas 14
Texas Tech 28, Baylor 0

Nonconference opponents

San Jose State 35, SMU 10
Notre Dame 20, Stanford 14
Iowa 21, Michigan State 16

Upcoming Opponents' Schedules

	Texas Tech (5-1)
Aug. 25	New Mexico, W 24-3
Sept. 2	Utah State, W 38-16
Sept. 9	North Texas, W 13-7
Sept. 16	Louisiana-Lafayette, W 26-0
Sept. 30	at Texas A&M, L 33-15
Oct. 7	Baylor, W 28-0
Oct. 14	Nebraska
Oct. 21	at Kansas State
Oct. 28	at Kansas
Nov. 4	Texas
Nov. 11	Oklahoma State
Nov. 18	at Oklahoma

	Baylor (2-3)
Aug. 31	at North Texas, W 20-7
Sept. 16	Minnesota, L 34-9
Sept. 23	South Florida, W 26-13
Sept. 30	Iowa State, L 31-17
Oct. 7	at Texas Tech, L 28-0
Oct. 14	Texas A&M
Oct. 21	at Nebraska
Oct. 28	at Texas
Nov. 4	Oklahoma
Nov. 11	Missouri
Nov. 18	at Oklahoma State

Game 6

at Texas Tech
Oct. 14

Location: Lubbock, Texas

Enrollment: 24,185

1999 record: 6-5

Coach: Mike Leach, first year

Series: Nebraska leads 5-0

Time TBA (prob. 6 p.m., Fox Sports Net)

Jones Stadium, Lubbock, Texas



Red Raider to Watch

Middle linebacker Lawrence Flugence was the nation's leading tackler through games of Sept. 30.

Flugence, who had just six total tackles as a redshirt freshman reserve defensive end and special



teams' player in 1999, had 64 tackles in the Red Raiders' first five games this season. His average of 12.8 tackles per game was 1.75 more than Virginia's Byron

Thweat.

The 6-foot-1, 221-pounder from Klein, Texas, moved from defensive end back to linebacker before spring practice.

Quick Facts

Texas Tech ranked fourth nationally in total defense and second in the Big 12 behind Kansas State, entering Saturday's game.

The Red Raiders ranked 11th in scoring defense, allowing only 11.8 points per game. That mark dropped to 9.8 after the shutdown of Baylor. Texas Tech ranked second nationally against the pass and first in the Big 12.

Offensively, sophomore quarterback Kliff Kingsbury has passed for 1,733 yards and 11 touchdowns. He was 33-of-50 for 322 yards and two touchdowns against Baylor.

On Deck

Baylor
Oct. 21

Location: Waco, Texas

Enrollment: 13,334

1999 record: 1-10

Coach: Kevin Steele, second year

Series: Nebraska leads 5-1

Time TBA

Memorial Stadium, Lincoln



Tentative 2 Deeps

NEBRASKA OFFENSE

SE	3	Matt Davison***	6-1	185	Sr.
	9	Wilson Thomas*	6-5	205	So.
LT	58	Dave Volk**	6-5	290	Jr.
	66	Jon Rutherford**	6-3	300	Jr.
LG	77	Toni Fonoti*	6-4	335	So.
	50	Jon Dawson	6-2	280	Fr.
C	54	Dominic Raiola**	6-2	300	Jr.
	66	Jon Rutherford**	6-3	300	Jr.
RG	55	Russ Hochstein***	6-4	290	Sr.
	50	Jon Dawson	6-2	280	Fr.
RT	65	Jason Schwab**	6-1	305	Sr.
	66	Jon Rutherford**	6-3	300	Jr.
TE	87	Tracey Wistrom**	6-5	230	Jr.
	99	Aaron Golliday*	6-4	285	So.
QB	7	Eric Crouch**	6-1	200	Jr.
	10	Jammal Lord	6-2	210	Fr.
FB	15	Willie Miller***	6-1	245	Sr.
	4	Judd Davies	6-0	240	Fr.
IB	38	Dan Alexander***	6-0	245	Sr.
and	36	Correll Buckhalter***	6-0	225	Sr.
WB	12	Bobby Newcombe***	6-0	200	Sr.
	8	John Gibson**	6-0	195	Sr.
PK	26	Josh Brown*	6-2	190	So.

NEBRASKA DEFENSE

LR	57	Chris Kelsay*	6-5	255	So.
or	98	Demoine Adams*	6-2	235	So.
NT	70	Jason Lohr*	6-2	275	Jr.
	85	Casey Nelson*	6-1	285	Jr.
DT	91	Loran Kaiser***	6-4	290	Sr.
	56	Jeremy Slechta**	6-6	285	Jr.
RR	83	Kyle Vanden Bosch***	6-4	260	Sr.
	95	J.P. Wichmann*	6-4	230	Jr.
SLB	43	Scott Shandle*	6-2	230	So.
	41	Rod Baker*	6-0	225	Sr.
MLB	13	Carlos Polk***	6-2	260	Sr.
	48	Jamie Burrow**	6-1	225	Jr.
WLB	34	Randy Stella*	6-0	200	Jr.
or	9	Mark Vedral**	6-1	205	Jr.
LCB	3	Keyuo Craver**	5-10	190	Jr.
	28	Pat Ricketts	5-11	180	Fr.
FS	14	Dion Booker**	6-1	205	Jr.
or	19	Clint Finley***	6-0	205	Sr.
ROV	25	Joe Walker***	5-10	205	Sr.
or	19	Clint Finley***	6-0	205	Sr.
RCB	16	Erwin Swiney**	6-0	185	Jr.
or	5	DeJuan Groce*	5-10	190	So.
P	17	Dan Hadenfeldt*	5-11	195	Sr.

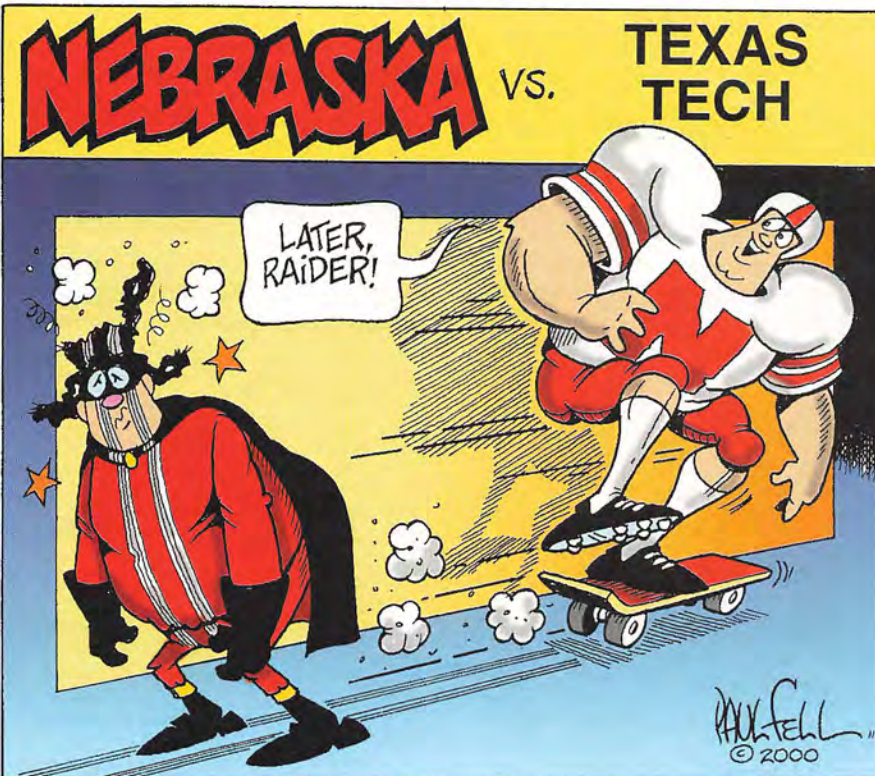
TEXAS TECH OFFENSE

LT	77	Paul Erickson*	6-5	284	So.
	73	John DePasquale**	6-4	277	Sr.
LG	67	Lance Williams**	6-2	306	Jr.
	63	J.J. Williams	6-6	277	So.
C	66	Toby Cecil	6-4	262	Fr.
	59	Kyle Sanders**	6-2	300	Sr.
RG	65	Casey Keck	6-3	247	Fr.
	59	Kyle Sanders**	6-2	300	Sr.
RT	72	Rex Richards*	6-4	299	So.
	75	Jason May*	6-4	295	Jr.
QB	16	Kliff Kingsbury*	6-4	200	So.
	4	B.J. Symons	6-2	204	Fr.
F	2	Ricky Williams**	5-9	195	Sr.
	48	Foy Munlin	6-0	218	Fr.
H	19	Shaun Williams*	5-8	171	So.
	32	James Easterling***	5-11	201	Sr.
Y	81	Tim Baker***	6-5	202	Sr.
	86	Mickey Peters	6-3	194	Fr.
X	22	Derek Dorris***	6-2	200	Sr.
	83	Jamail Broussard	5-9	168	Fr.
Z	82	Carlos Francis	5-9	188	Fr.
	87	Darrell Jones**	6-3	195	Jr.
PK	49	Chris Birkholz**	6-0	184	Sr.

TEXAS TECH DEFENSE

LE	9	Aaron Hunt*	6-3	239	So.
	93	Zeno McCoy*	6-5	219	So.
LT	76	Kris Kocurek***	6-5	293	Sr.
	97	Josh Page*	6-2	277	So.
RT	99	Robert Wyatt*	6-1	301	So.
	97	Josh Page*	6-2	277	So.
RE	37	Devin Lemons***	6-3	222	Sr.
	43	Rashon Rasberry	6-3	235	Jr.
OLB	15	Dorian Pitts***	6-4	210	Fr.
	30	Jason Wesley	5-11	201	Fr.
MLB	51	Lawrence Flugence*	6-1	221	So.
	53	Rusty Bucy*	6-1	226	So.
OLB	38	John Norman***	6-1	225	Sr.
	41	Marquis Turner	6-0	210	Fr.
LCB	1	Antwan Alexander***	6-0	199	Sr.
	21	Brian Giddens***	5-10	186	Sr.
FS	8	Mark Washington***	6-0	190	Sr.
	6	Paul McClendon**	5-10	178	Jr.
SS	31	Kevin Curtis**	6-3	209	Jr.
	28	Ryan Aycock	6-0	187	Fr.
RCB	39	Derrick Briggs**	5-10	168	Sr.
	7	Eric Cooper	5-11	194	Fr.
P	36	Eric Rosiles*	6-0	200	Sr.

THE PAUL FELL PREDICTION



OCT. 14, 2000

HUSKERS ROLL THROUGH LUBBOCK LEAVING RED RAIDERS BEWILDERED AND BEDRAGGLED!

PICKS

NEBRASKA AT TEXAS TECH

Brian Hill Editor

The Red Raiders are off to an impressive start (5-1), but you have to question the competition. Tech has played just one team with a winning record, losing 33-15 at Texas A&M. Although the defense is still allowing some big plays, Nebraska shows signs of putting it all together. **Nebraska 41, Texas Tech 20**

Mike Babcock Contributing Editor

The Red Raiders' new control passing offense could give Nebraska trouble. And Texas Tech has built up some enthusiasm under first-year head coach Mike Leach. But the Cornhuskers should prevail in the late, great Buddy Holly's hometown. **Nebraska 45, Texas Tech 21**

Bob Schaller Contributing Writer

This will be little more than a "passing test" for the Huskers. However, don't look for them to get a failing grade this time, not against a team without much of a running game, and a defense that can't stop the option. **Nebraska 56, Texas Tech 18**

Terry Douglass Grand Island (Neb.) Independent Sports Editor

It's a dangerous double for Nebraska, as the Cornhuskers are playing their second consecutive game on the road. Texas Tech is always tough playing at home after dark — just ask Texas and Texas A&M. This one could be in doubt well into the fourth quarter. **Nebraska 31, Texas Tech 20**

BY THE NUMBERS

Nebraska vs. Iowa State Oct. 7, 2000 • Jack Trice Stadium • Ames, Iowa

Score By Quarters

Nebraska	0	13	8	28	—	49
Iowa State	7	7	6	7	—	27

Team Stats

	NU	ISU
First Downs	20	18
Rushing	13	2
Passing	7	14
Penalty	0	2
Rushing Attempts	60	25
Yards Gained Rushing	347	64
Yards Lost Rushing	11	27
Net Yards Rushing	336	37
Net Yards Passing	164	346
Passes Attempted	17	43
Passes Completed	7	22
Had Intercepted	1	2
Total Plays	77	68
Total Net Yards	500	383
Avg. Gain Per Play	6.5	5.6
Fumbles-Lost	1-0	2-0
Penalties-Yards	5-38	8-71
Punts-Yards	2-85	8-202
Avg. Per Punt	42.5	37.8
Punt Returns-Yards	6-73	1-5
Interceptions-Yards	2-9	1-40
Fumble Returns-Yards	0-0	0-0
Kickoff Returns-Yards	2-20	4-57
Possession Time	33:11	26:49

Scoring

ISU — Craig Campbell 53-yard pass from Sage Rosenfels (Mike McKnight kick)
NU — Correll Buckhalter 9-yard run (Josh Brown kick)
NU — Brown 40-yard field goal
ISU — Jamarcus Powers 40-yard interception return (McKnight kick)
NU — Brown 24-yard field goal
NU — Buckhalter 1-yard run (Brown kick)
ISU — Ennis Haywood 4-yard run (kick failed)
NU — Willie Miller 9-yard run (Brown kick)
NU — Buckhalter 1-yard run (Brown kick)
NU — Eric Crouch 1-yard run (Brown kick)
ISU — J.J. Moses 15-yard pass from Rosenfels (McKnight kick)
NU — Jammal Lord 6-yard run (Brown kick)
Att. — 50,074
Temp. — 41

Individual Leaders

NEBRASKA

RUSHING

Name	Att.	Yds.	YPC	LNG	TD
Crouch, E.	19	138	7.3	40	1
Alexander, D.	21	96	4.6	28	0
Diedrick, D.	3	39	13.0	22	0
Miller, W.	5	29	5.8	11	1
Buckhalter, C.	9	20	2.2	9	3
Lord, J.	1	6	6.0	6	1
Newcombe, B.	1	5	5.0	5	0
Davies, J.	1	3	3.0	3	0

PASSING

Name	C-A-I	Pct.	Yds.	TD
Crouch, E.	17-7-1	41.2	164	0

RECEIVING

Name	No.	Yds.	YPC	LNG	TD
Wistrom, T.	4	101	25.3	52	0
Newcombe, B.	2	38	19.0	27	0
Buckhalter, C.	1	25	25.0	25	0

PUNTING

Name	No.	Yds.	Avg.	LNG
Hadenfeldt, D.	2	85	42.5	54

PUNT RETURNS

Name	No.	Yds.	YPR	LNG	TD
Walker, J.	2	44	22.0	37	0
Newcombe, B.	4	29	7.3	33	0

KICKOFF RETURNS

Name	No.	Yds.	YPR	LNG	TD
Newcombe, B.	1	20	20.0	20	0
Hollowell, T.J.	1	0	0.0	0	0

DEFENSE

Name	UT	AT	TT	FL	Int.	Sacks
Vanden Bosch	4	4	8	5-22	0	1-8
Slechta, J.	3	3	6	2-2	0	0
Swiney, E.	3	3	6	0	0	0
Craver, K.	2	3	5	0	0	0
Shanle, S.	2	2	4	0	0	0
Walker, J.	2	1	3	0	0	0
Stella, R.	1	2	3	1-2	0	0
Lohr, J.	0	3	3	0	0	0
Ricketts, P.	2	0	2	0	0	0
Adams, D.	1	1	2	0	0	0
Finley, C.	1	1	2	0	0	0
Kelsay, C.	1	1	2	0	0	0
Burrow, J.	0	2	2	1-1	0	0
Groce, D.	1	0	1	0	0	0
Smith, J.	1	0	1	0	0	0
Polk, C.	1	0	1	0	0	0
Hemje, J.	1	0	1	0	0	0
Diedrick, D.	1	0	1	0	0	0
Beveridge, T.	1	0	1	0	0	0
Watchorn, T.	0	1	1	0	1-9	0
Woodward, W.	0	1	1	0	0	0
Vedral, M.	0	1	1	0	0	0
Garrison, J.	0	1	1	0	0	0
Gibson, J.	0	1	1	0	0	0
Amos, W.	0	0	0	0	1-0	0

IOWA STATE

RUSHING

Name	Att.	Yds.	YPC	LNG	TD
Haywood, E.	11	27	2.5	15	1
Moses, J.J.	2	14	7.0	9	0
Wagner, M.	4	4	1.0	3	0
Baldwin, C.	1	-2	-2.0	0	0
Rosenfels, S.	7	-6	-0.9	5	0

PASSING

Name	C-A-I	Pct.	Yds.	TD
Rosenfels, S.	22-42-1	52.4	346	2
Danielson, L.	0-1-1	0.0	0	0

RECEIVING

Name	No.	Yds.	YPC	LNG	TD
Moses, J.J.	11	158	14.4	38	1
Anthony, C.	4	43	10.8	15	0
Campbell, C.	3	119	39.7	53	1
Haywood, E.	3	13	4.3	7	0
Banks, M.	1	13	13.0	13	0

PUNTING

Name	No.	Yds.	Avg.	LNG
Gomez, C.	8	202	37.8	52

PUNT RETURNS

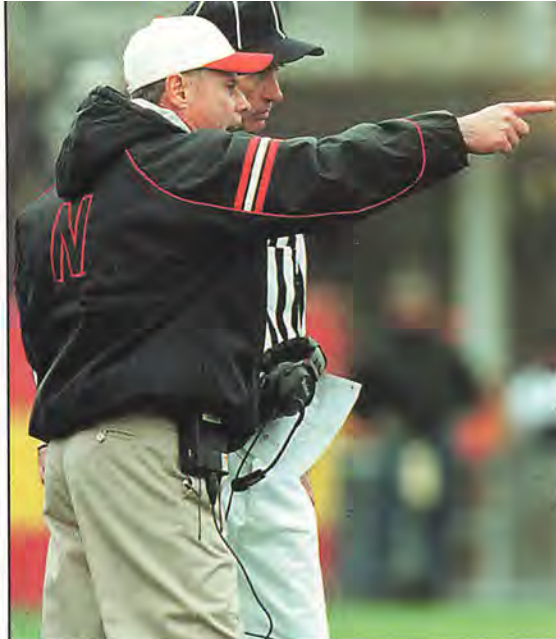
Name	No.	Yds.	YPR	LNG	TD
Moses, J.J.	1	5	5.0	5	0

KICKOFF RETURNS

Name	No.	Yds.	YPR	LNG	TD
Moses, J.J.	3	41	13.7	22	0
Billups, J.	1	16	16.0	16	0

DEFENSE

Name	UT	AT	TT	FL	Int.	Sacks
Reed, J.	3	7	10	1-2	0	0
Walker, D.	1	9	10	1-5	0	0
Avey, D.	6	3	9	0	0	0
Heyward, R.	2	6	8	0	0	0
Austin, A.	2	5	7	0	0	0
Densmore, D.	2	5	7	0	0	0
Turner, A.	1	6	7	0	0	0
Powers, J.	3	3	6	1-1	1-40	0
Harklau, R.	0	6	6	1-1	0	0
Word, M.	0	6	6	0	0	0
Tucker, T.	0	5	5	0	0	0
Eilers, J.	1	3	4	0	0	0
Whitaker, C.	1	3	4	2-7	0	0
Anslay, B.	3	0	3	0	0	0
DeRonde, K.	1	2	3	1-3	0	0
Timmons, M.	1	1	2	0	0	0
Runk, A.	1	0	1	0	0	0
Sloth, R.	1	0	1	0	0	0
Lyftogt, J.	0	1	1	0	0	0
Campbell, C.	0	1	1	0	0	0



Nebraska Coach Frank Solich discusses a call with an official.

2000 SEASON STATS

RUSHING

Name	G	Att.	Yds.	YPG	TD
Alexander, D.	5	84	561	112.2	4
Crouch, E.	5	79	478	95.6	8
Buckhalter, C.	5	54	374	74.8	3
Miller, W.	5	25	123	24.6	1
Davies, J.	5	10	97	19.4	0
Diedrick, D.	5	9	57	11.4	1
Lord, J.	3	5	33	11.0	1
Miller, R.	2	2	10	5.0	0
Grixby, D.	3	1	9	3.0	0
Newcombe, B.	5	5	8	1.6	0
Davis, J.	2	1	3	1.5	0
Collins, T.	1	2	2	2.0	0

PASSING

Name	G	C-A-I	Pct.	Yds.	TD
Crouch, E.	5	39-78-4	50.0	666	8
Lord, J.	3	1-3-1	33.3	24	0

RECEIVING

Name	G	No.	Yds.	YPC	YPG	TD
Wistrom, T.	5	14	247	17.6	49.4	4
Davison, M.	5	10	191	19.1	38.2	2
Newcombe, B.	5	8	134	16.8	26.8	0
Buckhalter, C.	5	3	68	22.6	13.6	1
Bowling, J.	5	2	25	12.5	5.0	1
Davies, J.	5	1	15	15.0	3.0	0
Golliday, A.	5	1	7	7.0	1.4	0
Alexander, D.	5	1	3	3.0	.6	0

FIELD GOALS

Name	G	Att.	Good	Long
Brown, J.	5	5	2	40

PUNTING

Name	No.	Yds.	Avg.	LNG
Hadenfeldt, D.	19	813	42.8	54
Brown, J.	1	28	28.0	28

DEFENSE

Name	G	UT	AT	TT	FL	Int.	S/Yds.
Polk, C.	5	15	23	38	2-14	0	1-10
Stella, R.	5	15	12	27	4-16	0	2.5-14
Shanle, S.	5	13	12	25	1-1	1-18	0
Walker, J.	5	14	9	23	1-1	1-5	0
Vanden Bosch, K.	5	11	11	22	7-30	0	2-14
Craver, K.	5	9	13	22	1-9	0	1-9
Booker, D.	5	10	8	18	0	0	0
Lohr, J.	5	6	11	17	2-3	0	0
Slechta, J.	5	7	9	16	3-9	0	1-7
Kaiser, L.	4	5	10	15	0	0	0
Kelsay, C.	5	5	8	13	1-4	0	5-4
Finley, C.	5	9	2	11	1-1	0	0
Groce, D.	5	8	2	10	0	0	0

TEAM STATISTICS

Total Offensive Yards	2,447	1,744				
Plays	364	330				
Average Per Play	6.7	5.3				
Average Per Game	489.4	348.8				
Net Rushing Yards	1,757	697				
Attempts	283	156				
TDs Rushing	18	3				
Net Passing Yards	690	1,074				
Completions	40	77				
Average Per Pass	8.5	6.2				
Average Per Catch	17.3	13.9				
Average Per Game	138.0	214.8				
TDs Passing	8	6				
Sacks By-Yards	9-62	7-52				
Fumbles-Lost	6-1	7-1				
Penalties-Yards	27-221	44-353				
Scoring	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	OT	TOT
NU	35	69	43	56	6	209
Opponents	27	27	30	14	3	101

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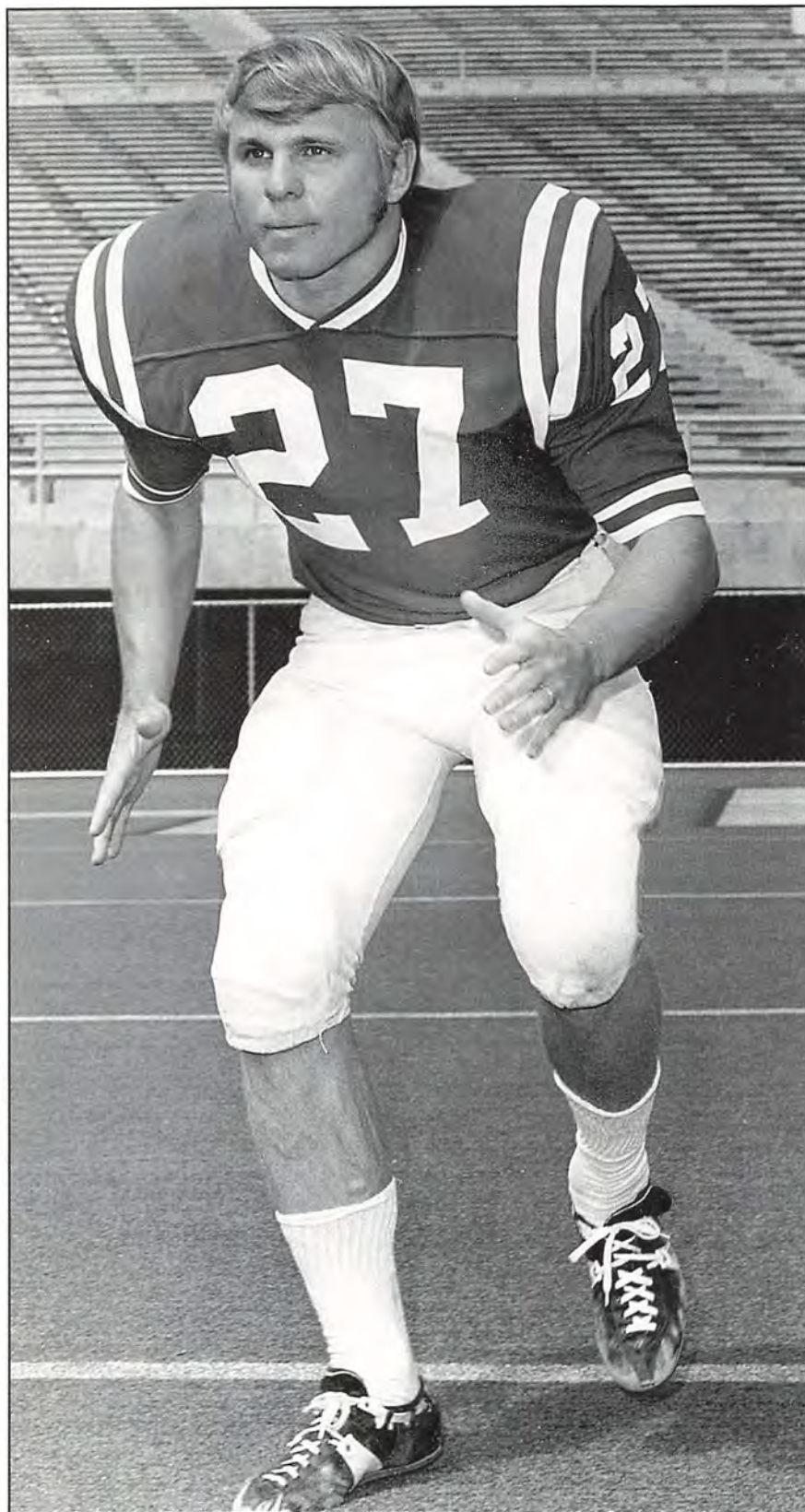
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No Doubts



***Defensive back
Blahak says
losing wasn't a
consideration
for 1970 team***

By Mike Babcock

Joe Blahak can still hear the sound of the collision. He saw the hole open and then close, filled by Nebraska's Dave Walline, a 6-foot-2, 238-pound defensive tackle.

Missouri tailback Joe Moore reached the hole at the same time.

Walline slammed Moore to Memorial Stadium's new artificial turf. Moore, who had rushed for 156 yards or more in three of the previous four games, suffered a shoulder separation on the play.

His loss seemed to demoralize Missouri, which had edged out Nebraska as the preseason favorite to win the conference title in a vote following the Big Eight Skywriters tour.

The Tigers came to Lincoln with a 3-1 record and a No. 16 ranking in the Associated Press poll. But they left town 21-7 losers, and would lose four of their final six games to finish 5-6.

By the Missouri game, the Cornhuskers were 3-0-1 and had climbed to No. 6 in the AP rankings. They also had begun to develop the attitude that would lead to the first of back-to-back national championships. "I think we thought we were good," said Blahak.

"It's hard to explain. But you get to the point where you don't think

Joe Blahak was one of five sophomores who started for the 1970 team. He went on to become an All-Big Eight selection in 1971 and 1972.

The First

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Thirty years have passed since Nebraska won its first official national title. And during those 30 years, Nebraska has finished atop the national rankings four more times, including three from 1994 to 1997. As the 1970 season illustrates, championships can depend on luck as well as on preparation and design. In a 12-part series, Huskers Illustrated takes a game-by-game look at the 1970 season.

about losing. That's what makes great teams. It was unconscionable to think about losing. It was never there."

Blahak had a better view of Walline's jarring hit on Moore than most in the sellout crowd of 67,538 that October afternoon. He was in the Nebraska secondary. "I saw it from behind," he said.

Blahak was a sophomore, one of five who started for the 1970 team. The others were center Doug Dumler, wingback Johnny Rodgers, tight end Jerry List and defensive end Willie Harper.

"I was lucky," said Blahak, the left cornerback. "I came to Nebraska at a pretty good time."

Three starters in the 1969 secondary were gone: Dana Stephenson, Randy Reeves and Al Larson. And Blahak stepped into the lineup in the second game of the season against Southern California.

He probably would have started the opener against Wake Forest, had it not been for his older brother Herman's returning to Columbus, Neb., on leave from the Air Force. Herman, a pilot in the Vietnam War,

Game 5

Nebraska 21, Missouri 7

Oct. 10, 1970
Memorial Stadium

	Score	Time
(First Quarter)		
NU — Jeff Kinney, 12-yd pass from Jerry Tagge (Paul Rogers kick)	7-0	8:32
(Second Quarter)		
MU — Mike Farmer, 1-yd run (Jack Bastable kick)	7-7	14:50
(Fourth Quarter)		
NU — Van Brownson, 1-yd run (Rogers kick)	14-7	12:54
NU — Johnny Rodgers, 48-yd punt return (Rogers kick)	21-7	4:01



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was stationed in Thailand, and the two hadn't seen each other for five or six years.

Blahak asked Warren Powers, the Cornhuskers' secondary coach, if he could skip the walk-through practice on the Friday before the game to go home and see his brother. Powers said no.

Blahak then asked Powers if he could miss the team curfew in order to drive to Columbus. Again Powers said no. "So I told him, 'Do what you've got to do,'" said Blahak.

He went home after the walk-through and returned early the next morning.

"I didn't start, but I got to play quite a bit," he said.

Powers disciplined him the next week at practice. But Powers also told him to "grab a Blackshirt" to wear in practice. And he would wear a Blackshirt for the rest of his Cornhusker career.

Blahak's most memorable games during the 1970 season were the one at USC, his first start, and the Orange Bowl game victory against LSU,

So, Was It a Clip?

Nearly 30 years have passed. But Joe Blahak still gets asked the question. Did he clip punter Joe Wylie on Johnny Rodgers' punt return in the Nebraska-Oklahoma game in 1971?

Blahak responds with a question of his own. "Did the official throw a flag?"

No flag was thrown, the ques-

tioner admits. "Then there wasn't a clip," says Blahak.

Dr. David Blaha, a Lincoln dentist, has been mistakenly asked if he was the one who clipped Wylie. And "he tells people, 'Yes, I clipped him,'" Blahak said with a laugh.

"I've told Dave, 'Hey, no more of this.'"

which gave Nebraska its first national title.

"I wasn't nervous for very many games in my life," said Blahak, who went on to play five seasons in the National Football League after being an eighth-round draft pick of the Houston Oilers.

But he was nervous before the USC game in the Los Angeles Coliseum.

"My knees were knocking together. I was scared," he said.

The teams went onto the field

from the same end of the stadium, and the Trojans were introduced first. As they ran past him, "I thought, 'These guys are huge,'" Blahak said.

"Their reputation made them seem bigger than they were."

And they were greeted with what seemed to him thunderous applause.

The Cornhuskers followed USC out of the tunnel, and the cheering intensified. "Looking up in the stands, there was red everywhere. It was amazing," said Blahak.

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the Coliseum as they did to Notre Dame Stadium this season.

Blahak's recollection of the Orange Bowl is equally vivid, and not only because of the significance of the victory. "It was the only time (Bob) Devaney crawled down my throat," he said.

The Cornhuskers had concentrated on an LSU pass play during practice, and when the Tigers used it on what Blahak remembers as a "third-and-33," he broke on a receiver running a curl route. "I was real aggressive and jumped all over that curl," Blahak said. "I thought, 'Interception.'"

The problem was, he left another receiver open, running down the field. The pass was completed for a first down, with safety Bill Kosch coming over to make the tackle and save a touchdown.

That's how Blahak remembers it, anyway. The passing of time might have altered the exact distance a little. But it hasn't erased the particulars of Devaney's wrath, which he tried to avoid.

Instead of running directly to the sideline, where Devaney waited, Blahak ran down the field and exited to the area where the other defensive players were standing.

"I was madder than heck at myself," said Blahak. "But not as mad as Devaney. I looked to my right, and it was like a wave parting, all those big guys (stepping aside). Bob was wearing a red cap and a red jacket, and you couldn't tell where either of them ended and his face began.

"He grabbed my facemask and told me in words only he could put together if I ever did that again, I'd never play another down at Nebraska. I don't think I ever got beat again like that."

John Melton, a Devaney assistant, "still jokes about it when he sees me."

Blahak, who's in the insurance business in Lincoln, attended Cornhusker games when his oldest son Chad was a walk-on defensive back on the 1994 and 1995 national championship teams. But he doesn't often go to games now. "It's difficult for me after five years of pro ball," he said.

"I get frustrated. It's hard to be a fan."

It was hard to be a fan before he got to Nebraska, for that matter. He always preferred playing to watching. "I didn't see a Nebraska game until I played in one," he said. ■

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Last Season's Setters Adjust to New Roles

Wischmeier, McWilliams still key contributors for No. 1 Huskers

By Todd Henrichs

Lindsay Wischmeier and Jill McWilliams were a team last season.

From the first match of the year, they uniquely shared the difficult duties of setter for the Nebraska volleyball team. Wischmeier played three rotations, then went to the bench for three once McWilliams took over.

Back and forth they went, match after match, both first-year starters on a Husker team that hoped to contend for the national championship.

The task was daunting.

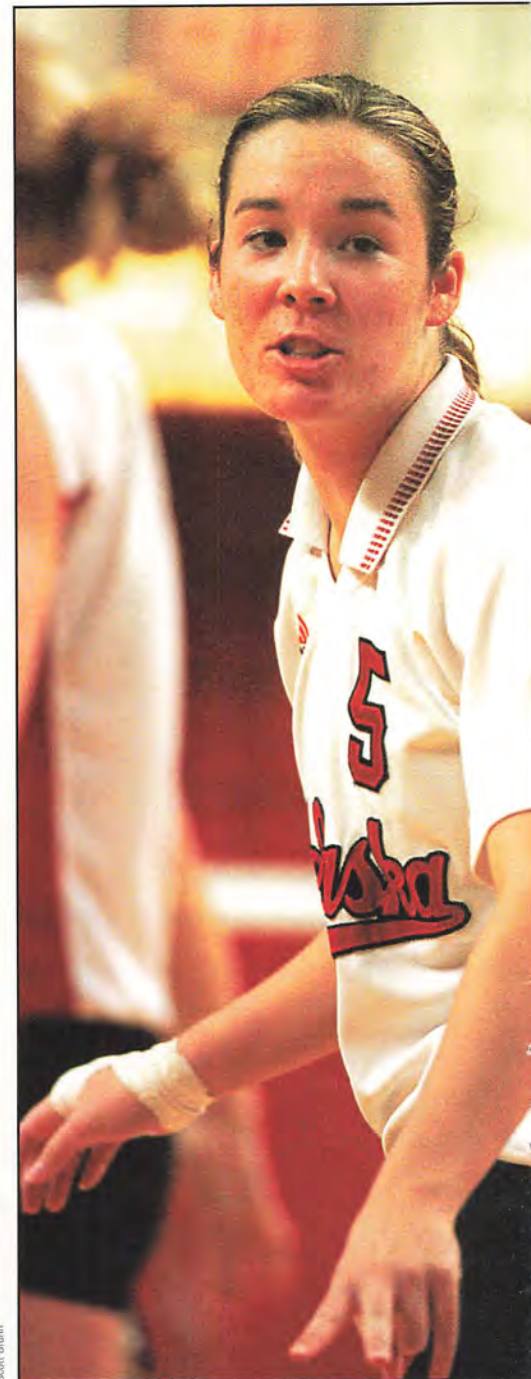
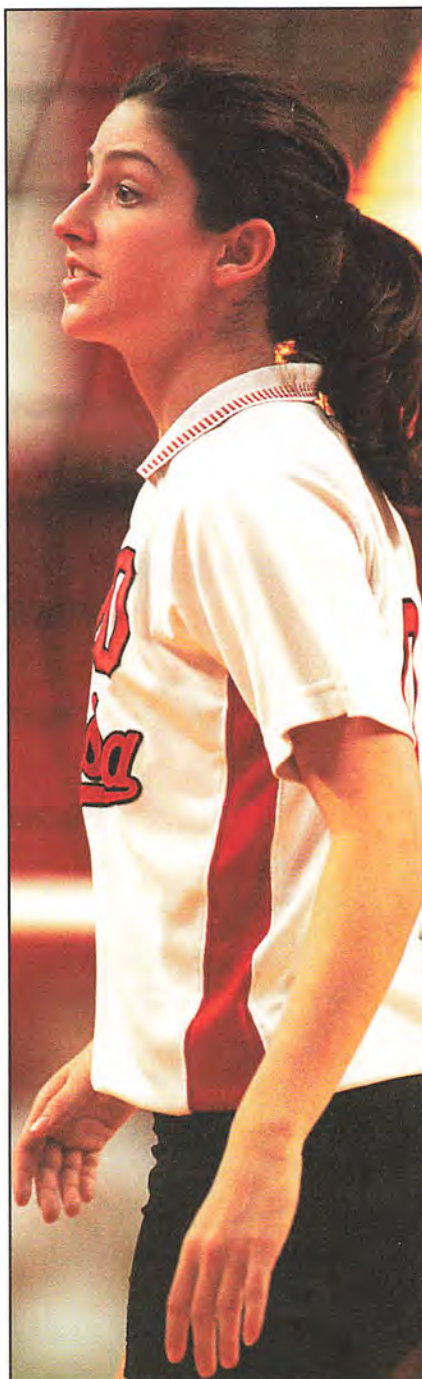
But things have gotten even more complicated for Wischmeier and McWilliams this season. Both are once again in new roles under first-year head coach John Cook.

McWilliams plays sparingly, but the senior tri-captain from Des Moines, Iowa, is charged with running the second-team offense that keeps NU's starters on their toes every day in practice.

Wischmeier, of Burchard, Neb., has moved to defensive specialist. Her job description was rewritten from setting balls in the air to keeping them from hitting the floor.

"Setting, you didn't have time to think about your mistakes because you knew the next play you're going to be setting the ball," Wischmeier said. "In my position now, you're served to only once in a while.

"It took me a while to build up confidence because any time I made an error, I felt like I blew my chance."



Jill McWilliams (left) runs the second-team offense that keeps the starters sharp in practice. Meanwhile, Lindsay Wischmeier has become a defensive specialist for the Huskers this season.

Scott Bruhn

Cook, who left a top-10 program at Wisconsin to come to Nebraska two years ago, understands the difficulty of any career change.

Yet Cook was confident in McWilliams' ability to lead NU, even from the bench. And in Wischmeier, he saw a competitive, pressure player who was perfectly suited to play back-row defense.

Beginning in individual workouts last January, Cook challenged Wischmeier to become the Big 12 defensive player of the year.

"We were confident that she would be great in that position," Cook said. "But it took her a while to adjust."

Instead of Wischmeier or McWilliams, now it's sophomore Greichaly Cepero who touches the ball on virtually every point. After playing an attacking position last year, Cepero is seen as a potential All-American at setter this season.

As one of Nebraska's best passers, it's rare to see a ball served in Wischmeier's direction. She might go through the back row and never touch the ball.

But when her chance comes, Wischmeier often has only a split-second to respond. Of her 72 digs this season, she best remembers thwarting All-

American Kristee Porter of UCLA.

"I think it was just by accident that I was there, and my arms were out," Wischmeier said. "That was probably the hardest dig I've ever had."

"It's a big challenge for a digger against a hitter and for you to come up with one of those digs, it just gives your team new energy. A dig gives me the bigger rush because it helps our team more."

Combined, Wischmeier's defense, serving and passing helped Nebraska to a 13-0 start and the No. 1 ranking in the AVCA/USA Today coaches' poll.

Like their football counterparts, the volleyball Huskers were to face a difficult task at improved Texas Tech this weekend.

Nebraska was virtually untested in the early stages of conference play. The Huskers won their first six Big 12 matches, all in sweeps.

So Cook has had to rely on practice time to judge whether or not his team is still improving. He's able to do that with a squad of reserves that includes McWilliams, volunteer assistant coach Guo Jun Li and Nancy Meendering.

Jun was once a member of the Chinese Olympic team. Meendering was an alternate to the U.S. national team this year and is therefore sitting

out a redshirt season.

And no one takes it easy in practice. "We have to challenge them," Cook said. "Oklahoma really didn't press us very much. At Kansas, we really weren't in a tight match."

"I want to be sure as a coach that in practice they're getting challenged and understanding what it is to fail so they know how to respond to those situations. We're going to be in some tough matches. I just don't know when."

When it comes, Cook expects Wischmeier to be ready. She was a year ago, starting her Nebraska career in a nationally televised match against Pacific.

Wischmeier finished with 458 assists, only 15 more than McWilliams, and led the team in aces with 21.

Earlier this season, Wischmeier ranked fourth among Huskers in digs while sharing the team lead in aces. She served aces twice in five of NU's first 13 matches.

Appropriately, Cook gauges her value in a number of ways.

"Is she worth five points a game with her serving and her defense and allowing us to side out?" Cook asks after every match.

If so, it usually adds up to a Nebraska victory. ■

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By James Hale

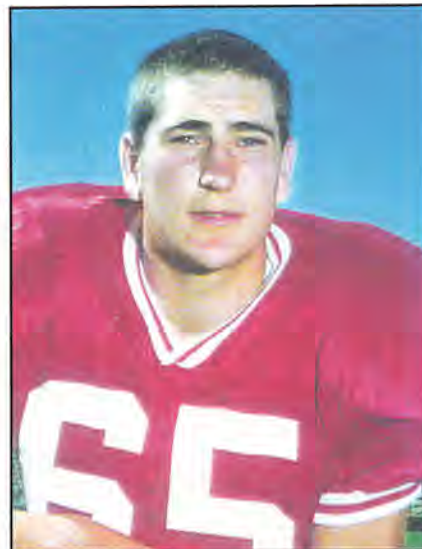
There are so many reasons why Nebraska is a great college football program that it is impossible to touch on all of the main ones here. It's obvious that tradition, fans, outstanding athletes and great coaching are common denominators at Nebraska, and these factors are a little more important in Lincoln than in most places.

However, we can break down the Cornhuskers even further and get to the root of their success. The fact that Nebraska can recruit an outstanding offensive line class every year guarantees that the Huskers will also be solid on offense every single year.

Granted, without a quarterback or All-America-type I-back, the offense wouldn't be special, but as long as Nebraska continues to put out an offensive line that is consistent with what it has been producing, the Huskers are never going to be down offensively.

A great offensive line can cover up for a mediocre quarterback or average skill players. Nebraska never has just an average quarterback, and there is never a shortage of talented skill position players to handle the football. However, if it ever comes to that, Nebraska will still be a solid offensive football team because its offensive lines year-in and year-out are among the best in the country.

It's uncanny how well Nebraska recruits in the offensive line. Each year,



Seppo Ewvaraye (left) and Gary Pike are two of the four offensive line prospects who have committed to Nebraska.

without even a phone call from Nebraska, many of the top offensive lineman in the country automatically have the Huskers on their list. Nebraska is quick and decisive when offering offensive lineman early because they know exactly what they are looking for.

Nebraska tries to recruit an entire offensive line every year, and already it is well on its way this year. Out of nine early commitments, four are regarded as offensive linemen. Dan Stevenson (6-foot-6, 305 pounds, with 5.02 speed in the 40-yard dash) of Barrington, Ill., Richie Incognito (6-4, 285, 5.0) of Glendale (Mountain View), Ariz., Seppo Ewvaraye (6-5, 323, 5.0) of Laurel, Neb., and Gary Pike (6-5, 275, 5.1) of Pueblo (Centennial), Colo., are talented enough to give Nebraska one of the top offensive line classes in the country.

Pike has no doubts that he made the

right decision.

"I am about as happy as I can get with my decision because I have a great scholarship at the school of my choice, and it is allowing me to enjoy my senior year," he said. "I am having a good year, but we are struggling as a team. We only have three returning starters on both sides of the ball, and right now we are 0-4. However, we have conference play coming up, and I think we will start to get better."

Ewvaraye, a foreign exchange student, had to wait patiently while some off-the-field-matters were cleared up, but after three games, he got a start on the 2000 season.

"I had to clear up some kind of visa problem, and it took me a while to get that accomplished," Ewvaraye said. "I finally got that done last week and played in my first game. I was pretty rusty, and I am disappointed in how I played. However, it was my first game, and I will get better. I am just glad I get to play some my senior year."

Despite the fact that four offensive linemen have already committed, Nebraska is still hunt for the top two offensive line prospects in the country.

Blake Larsen (6-7, 295, 5.1) of Atlantic, Iowa, is a very confident, talented offensive tackle who is very organized in his recruiting effort. Many consider Larsen the top offensive lineman in the country, and he has already set visits with Colorado, Notre Dame and Miami. Larsen said he will proba-

Nebraska Commitments for 2001

Player	Hometown (school)	Ht.	Wt.	Pos.
Seppo Ewvaraye	Laurel (Laurel-Concord), Neb.	6-5	323	OL/DL
Jared Helming	Springfield (Kickapoo), Mo.	6-4	270	DT
Richie Incognito	Glendale (Mountain View), Ariz.	6-4	285	OL
Mike McLaughlin	Omaha (Millard North), Neb.	6-1	175	QB
Gary Pike	Pueblo (Centennial), Colo.	6-5	275	OL
Cory Ross	Denver (Thomas Jefferson), Colo.	5-9	182	DB/WR
Barrett Ruud	Lincoln (Southeast), Neb.	6-2	220	LB
Dan Stevenson	Barrington, Ill.	6-6	305	OL
Mike Stuntz	Council Bluffs (St. Albert), Iowa	6-2	180	QB



Highly regarded Blake Larsen of Atlantic, Iowa, is considering Nebraska.

bly visit Michigan State and either Virginia or Iowa to complete his visit choices.

The fact Nebraska isn't listed as one of his five should be alarming to Nebraska fans. Larsen went to the Nebraska mini-camp, where he was timed at 5.1 in the 40 and bench pressed 335 pounds. He also recently visited Nebraska unofficially and came home very close to committing to the Huskers.

"Nebraska is just a great place with great coaches and players," Larsen said. "At some of the schools that I have visited, the players don't even talk to me, but I went to the Nebraska locker room after the Iowa game, and several of the players came up to me and treated me as if I was already on the team. They have made me feel so comfortable within the program.

"Nebraska is just all class, and Coach Solich has been great with me. He hasn't tried to force a decision out of me and just told me to take my time. I really appreciate that, and I am very close to choosing Nebraska."

Jami Hightower (6-4, 302, 5.2) of Jacksonville, Texas, is the other offensive lineman who many feel is the best in the country. You get quite an argument from the recruiting experts as to who is better between Hightower and Larsen.

Hightower is approaching his recruiting in a totally different manner than Larsen. He is taking his time and at this point he may have some favorites, but he hasn't ruled out any school.

"I like Texas, Texas A&M and Nebraska right now, but I am keeping a few more in mind, like Arkansas, LSU, Louisiana Tech and Oklahoma," Hightower said. "I really don't want to talk about a favorite right now because I am still talking to all schools, and I

NU Starts Early on 2002 Class

Nebraska is such a strong recruiting program that it already has a pledge toward its 2002 class.

Wide receiver Mark LeFlore (6-0, 180 pounds, 4.4 time in the 40-yard dash) of Omaha (Central), Neb., is only 16, and many feel he is the youngest player ever to commit to the Huskers.

LeFlore earned an offer from Coach Frank Solich when he scored the highest test score ever among 1,700 athletes who have attended the Nebraska summer camp.

"There is no question that Mark is a great athlete, and he proved that at Nebraska's camp this past summer," Central Coach Joe McMenamin said. "Normally you want your athletes to look around and think about this recruiting process, but Mark wanted to go to Nebraska so badly that I didn't see any reason to wait. He has always wanted to play at Nebraska, so why not?"

LeFlore had 11 catches for 228 yards and one touchdown through four games this season.

— During the mid 1970s, the Missouri Tigers had a tight end who was the best in college football. Kellen Winslow wasn't your typical tight end. He was a wide receiver playing the tight end position. Winslow could run with the skill position players, yet was physical enough to tangle at the line of scrimmage.

He was even better in the pros, when he became a Hall of Fame tight end with the San Diego Chargers. Winslow was the first of the hybrid tight ends that are so successful today. They can outrun a strong safety or linebacker and force a cornerback to cover them.

Was Winslow a one-of-a-kind tight end? No, there have been a few more like him, but has there ever been another just like Winslow? Well, that is debatable. But one thing is for sure, another Winslow is coming along, and he looks almost as good as the original.

Winslow's son of the same name (6-5, 223, 4.5) of Ranch Scripps, Calif., appears to have many of the same talents. Kellen Jr. has a great body, can run and has the frame to grow to 245 pounds in college. With sprinter's speed, Kellen Jr. is a deep threat, and a year ago, he burned defenses for 32 catches for 600 yards and 13 touchdowns.

This season, Winslow Jr. has hauled in 15 passes for 285 yards and three touchdowns. He also is grading out at 90 percent in blocking at the line of scrimmage. This almost too good to be true athlete can go anywhere in the country, and he is taking a close look at Nebraska.

"Nebraska has become a team that is really solid in my recruiting outlook," Winslow said. "They are always ranked in the top five in the country and always seem to be playing for the national championship. I have noticed that they are beginning to throw the ball more as well. I know they have a great running game, but anymore, you can't win on the running game alone."

Winslow's good friend, Willie Buchanan of Oceanside, Calif., recently committed to Southern Cal, and that has Winslow thinking about the Trojans as well.

"Willie is one of the best wide receivers in the country, and we could make quite a receiving combination at USC," Winslow said. "With Willie committing to the Trojans recently, I would have to say that they have moved to the front. I have some tough decisions to make and some good schools to make them from."

— Nebraska is back into the picture for national running back Cedrick Houston (6-0, 200, 4.4) of Clarendon, Ark. Houston recently took a visit to Michigan State and liked that visit so much that he says he is no longer committed to Arkansas.

Houston says he will start setting visits with Arkansas, Michigan State, Texas, Tennessee and Miami. ■

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don't want to rule anybody out.

"I even have some schools recruiting me on defense, and I like defense a little bit better. I realize that I will probably play on offense, and most schools are recruiting me as an offensive tackle, but I want to listen to all schools and see what they have to say."

Robert Bergman (6-5, 280, 5.1) of Bakersfield, Calif., is ranked as one of the 10 best offensive linemen in the country. His team is undefeated at 4-0, and Bergman is playing well on both sides of the ball.

"My future is on offense, but I have a lot of fun playing defensive tackle and defensive end," Bergman said. "We have a great team, and I feel some great things can happen for us."


Bergman is another who claims he doesn't have a favorite, but there is no question that Nebraska is very much in the race.

"I still have a number of schools that I want to look at, but I am beginning to narrow my choices down a little bit," Bergman said. "I like Michigan State, Notre Dame, Ohio State, Nebraska, Washington, USC, Arizona State, Miami and Oregon. I really have a great interest in Nebraska because of how they play along the offensive line. They have a great tradition of offensive linemen at Nebraska, and they would be a great program to play for."

Joe Toledo (6-5, 287, 5.0) of Encinitas (Las Costa Canyon), Calif., fancies himself as a tight end, but he is a top-30 offensive lineman. Nebraska has been out to watch him play, but they haven't offered a scholarship yet.

"If Nebraska doesn't offer a scholarship before I start setting visits in two or three weeks, then I will probably eliminate them," Toledo said. "I really don't want to do that because I really like their program, but I have a number of schools that have offered me, and I have to do what is best for my situation. I really like Kansas State right now, and I also have offers from UCLA, USC, Wisconsin, Washington State and Arizona State."

Jed Paulsen (6-3, 270, 5.1) of Columbia (Hickman), Mo., already has offers from North Carolina State, Kansas and Missouri. Paulsen says his top three schools are Missouri, Nebraska and Kansas. Jake Wood (6-6, 270, 5.1) of Bettendorf (Pleasant Valley), Iowa, has been offered by Iowa State, Stanford, Northwestern and Wisconsin. However, Wood insists his top two choices are Nebraska and Illinois, two schools who hadn't offered him at press time. Jim Moravchik (6-5, 275, 5.2) of Sun Prairie, Wis., is leaning toward Wisconsin, but he says that Nebraska, Northwestern, Georgia Tech and Notre Dame are also showing him a ton of attention. ■



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Answers in Oct. 21 issue

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It's Still Wide Open

Solich says it's just a guess for everybody as to who the best team is in the country



Mike BABCOCK

FRANK SOLICH was in good spirits when he sat down to be interviewed by reporters following Nebraska's 49-27 victory against upset-minded Iowa State.

Before his opening statement, however, he was asked to move to the chair to his left so that he would be directly behind the microphones on a table in front of him.

"Move over a chair?" he asked as he switched.

"Sometimes we pull a guy out of a game for making a mistake like that."

Those in the cramped room across the hall from the visitors' locker room laughed.

So did Solich.

After answering a few questions about his team's fifth victory, he was asked if he knew that Florida State had lost to Miami earlier in the day.

The final score, 27-24, was announced at Jack Trice Stadium late in the first quarter.

"I didn't hear the final," Solich said. "They lost today?"

He claimed not to be surprised by what had occurred in Miami. "It's no surprise when anybody loses," he said. "I think the number of undefeated teams is starting to shrink rather drastically right now. And a lot of good teams, an awful lot of good teams, are with one loss."

Auburn, Oregon State and North Carolina State were among other previously undefeated teams that had lost. And, of course, Iowa State. "That's generally the way it is," said Solich. "It is very difficult to get through a year without a loss. If you do, you're probably pretty thankful that you didn't have a great deal of injuries. You're pretty thankful about your schedule. That's usually how it works."

"Right now, there are an awful lot of good football teams out there, and I think the last half of the season . . . who knows how that will play out. It's still anybody's ball game."

Solich said much the same thing earlier in the week, when Nebraska dropped from No. 1 to No. 2 in the Associated Press poll following its 42-24 victory against Missouri at home.

Solich said he didn't have "a lot of thoughts about that (dropping) other than at this point in time it's just a guess for everybody as to who the best team is in the country."

That weekend nine teams in the AP's Top 25 had lost.

"It's very, very difficult to just be a truly dominating football team and one that just separates itself completely from everybody else," said Solich. "We're in a pack of teams that are undefeated."

"We feel very good about that. We've got a lot of games to win."

The drop in the polls, which should be corrected in the

wake of Florida State's loss, was evidence that winning isn't necessarily enough, that the quality of a victory also can influence voters. "We try to ignore point spreads, as you well know," Solich said at his Tuesday news conference.

"In fact, we DO ignore them."

But apparently enough voters didn't that Nebraska fell behind Florida State for a week.

The previous week, the Cornhuskers had 39 first-place votes and 1,743 points. Last week, the points were the same but the first-place votes dropped to 28, allowing Florida State, the defending champion, to climb to the top. The Seminoles received 42 first-place votes, up from 30, and 1,745 points.

Nebraska remained No. 1 in the coaches' poll, but its lead over Florida State shrunk, from 44 first-place votes and 1,455 points to 37 first-place votes and 1,452 points.

All of the first-place votes that Nebraska lost went to the Seminoles.

Given what happened, "you start to feel that on every opportunity, you better score to make sure things stay as they are in the polls," Solich said the day after the Missouri game.

But he could hardly be accused to running up the score on Iowa State.

Late in the game, back-ups such as redshirted freshman quarterback Jammal Lord and sophomore I-back Dahrran Diedrick finally got an opportunity to play. Lord scored the game's final touchdown on a 6-yard run with 1:01 remaining. Diedrick set it up with three carries for 39 yards.

"I was real glad to get a few snaps in for Jammal, a few snaps in for Dahrran, not only because those guys deserve it but they need to get snaps. We need to have them ready," Solich said.

"It's an awful long season. It seems like we've already played a season. And we've played five games. You're always, of course, are a little leery of how it's going to work as you go down the stretch in terms of injuries. So you need to have

a lot of players ready to go. And they're only ready to go if they get a chance to get some playing time. So that was really something that was great."

Solich couldn't have been much happier. Certainly there is much to be done if the Cornhuskers are to play for the national championship in the Orange Bowl on Jan. 3. But he expected Iowa State to present a formidable challenge.

And a victory is a victory, however it's gained. ■



Frank Solich is 26-5 as he nears the midpoint of his third season as head coach at NU.

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